

DEVELOPING SOCIOLINGUISTIC AWARENESS THROUGH A DIGITAL LEXICON
PROJECT IN A FIFTH GRADE CLASSROOM IN RURAL ALASKA

By

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A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts

in

Applied Linguistics

University of Alaska Fairbanks

December 2019

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Abstract

This teacher action research examines how teachers can build student awareness of language variations in order to help students make meaning during the learning process thus bridging the gap between home discourse and school discourse. In this study students built a digital lexicon using a class generated list of Village English terms that are present in Aniak, Alaska. The purpose of this study was to build students' sociolinguistic awareness through explicit instruction and the Aniak Digital Lexicon project. The findings showed that providing students with explicit instruction helped develop students during their meaning making process and students were able to differentiate between Village English and Standard Academic English. The findings in this research study can be used to inform educators interested in teaching students about language variations and in particular learning about their own dialectal variation of English.

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Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the Literacy for Emergent Bilinguals grant, funded through the US Department of Education for making this master's program possible. I would also like to thank my committee, Dr. Martelle, Dr. Siekmann and Dr. Patterson for their guidance and support throughout this process. Most importantly I would like to thank the students from Kuspuk School District who participated in this study. Lastly, I would like to thank my husband and son as well as my family and friends who supported and encouraged me along the way.

Chapter 1: Introduction

My name is Julia Boynton and I have been teaching and living in the rural village of Aniak, Alaska for going on eight years. My husband and I are both educators; he works at the junior/senior high school teaching math and I am at the elementary school teaching all subjects in a fifth-grade classroom. Education has always been extremely important to me. My mother was a teacher for over 40 years. She managed to raise four children and be a full-time educator as a single parent. I was awed and amazed at her ability to deeply care for her own students and find the time to equally care for her own children. Most evenings all four of us children were involved in extracurricular activities and somehow my mother would always find the time to be present at our events. She was a magician to me and I knew I wanted to similarly feel a deep passion for my work while finding the balance to care for and love my own family.

I grew up in a small community in Michigan. I was fortunate to have many wonderful educators while attending the Laingsburg Public Schools. I have a twin sister and two older brothers. We spent our summers exploring the farm lands around our home and attending numerous basketball camps. I was an avid basketball player and a fierce competitor and had aspirations to play college basketball. My senior year of high school I decided to attend Hope College in Holland, Michigan and play basketball and soccer there. At Hope, my love and passion for soccer developed and I played four years of soccer, while only playing one year of basketball. It was a wonderful experience to bond with teammates all while studying to become an educator. I left Hope College with a degree in Kinesiology in 2008. I spent the last two years of my undergraduate schooling at Northern Michigan University (NMU) in Marquette, Michigan which is in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. The incredible outdoor opportunities of Marquette

sparked my interest in outdoor recreation activities. I graduated from NMU with a Bachelor's of Science in Physical Education and a minor in History in 2010.

Soon after I graduated my husband, then boyfriend, and I decided we wanted to live in Alaska. We wanted to move to an area that provided a bounty of outdoor opportunities and we found just that place in Aniak. Today we both are employed with Kuspuk School District and we love living in the small rural village of Aniak, Alaska. The village of Aniak is nestled along the Kuskokwim River, which is the second largest river in Alaska. Most of the people in Aniak survive off subsistence fishing and hunting as well as the convenience of our Alaska Commercial grocery store. In Aniak we have found a passion for boating along the Kuskokwim River, fishing, moose hunting, backpacking and exploring the wilderness around us. We also purchased our own home in Aniak in 2014. We have two locally rescued dogs and eight egg laying chickens. We feel that it is important to establish Aniak as our home. By making our home in Aniak we are investing in the community as well as the schools. This shows our dedication to our students and community.

Teaching Background

I work with mainly Native Alaskan learners in a small village of around 500 people. Auntie Mary Nicoli Elementary Schools (AMNES) services all the children in the village of Aniak. AMNES holds grades PreK-fifth. We have about 85 students in our building. There has been a core group of teachers for the past few years that work well together and collaborate on a weekly basis, if not daily. I teach fifth grade students all subjects. There were 13 students in my class the 2018-19 school year.

In Aniak I have taken on many extra roles outside of the regular teacher duties. I have been Lead Teacher, High School Girls Basketball Coach, Jump Rope Club Leader, Math &

Science Expedition Science Fair Leader, Technology Leader, and I have volunteered for numerous other activities at my school. I love helping students find joy in learning and developing relationships with students to help them be successful.

When I first moved to the village of Aniak and began interacting with the children I immediately noticed a difference in the way they spoke compared to my speaking. This was one of the greatest surprises to me. Before moving to Alaska in the summer of 2011 I had lived in Michigan all of my life and did not notice much variation from what is called Standard Academic English (SAE), until I moved into the Upper Peninsula of Michigan (UP). In the UP I noticed a much more “Minnesota” type of English spoken. This English variation or dialect was very similar to the English I grew up speaking. In contrast, when I moved to Aniak I noticed a huge difference from the English language I had learned.

Focus of My Teacher Action Research

As an educator, it is crucial to understand the cultural values and needs of the emergent bilingual students we serve. In Aniak students do not speak their heritage language of Yugtun. Instead, a dialectal variety of English has formed, known as Village English (VE). I will explain in detail the dialect of VE and how it differs from SAE in Chapter 2.

The Village English (VE) spoken in rural Alaskan communities differs from the Standard Academic English (SAE) taught in schools. Adapting my instruction to ensure that students are making meaning is key to student learning. In doing this I help students make connections to words or ideas that are not common in their own lives. Over the last seven years teaching in Aniak I have noticed that students’ academic vocabulary is very limited and one result of this is low standardized reading scores. I feel that if students understand the language variations that are present in VE and SAE they may be able to perform better on standardized tests. My study

focuses on how I, as an educator, can help students bridge the gap between their own language variation and that of the academic world. My assumption is that an increased awareness of dialectal variation will support students in this effort. This study focuses on how a teacher can build students' linguistic awareness and what fifth graders notice about linguistic variation in our village while building a digital lexicon. This project was a way for students to build their awareness of dialectal differences.

My Research Questions

My inquiry as to what fifth graders notice about linguistic variation in our village while building a digital lexicon, led me to three main research questions:

1. What does Village English (VE) look like in Aniak?
2. What did I do to help my students learn about Aniak lexicon/VE?
3. What did my students learn about Aniak lexicon/VE?

Importance of this TAR to the Education Field and Teachers

As educators, we advocate for our students all the time. Through this teacher action research (TAR) I am advocating for educators to help students identify the differences between formal and informal language so that they can navigate the educational system. I also believe that students need to understand their own dialect and how it relates to the Standard Academic English being taught in the academic world. Language differences should not impede our students from learning. That is why it is crucial for educators to understand the needs of emergent bilinguals to ensure that they are getting what they need in order to learn.

As this TAR focuses on dialect, it is a less frequently addressed topic than students learning a second language, yet it is just as important to student learning. Second language acquisition theory addresses the need for students to learn language in context through real world

experiences. This is the same for students who speak a dialect or a variety of English that differs from the Standard Academic English (SAE) being taught in school. Through my research I looked at how teachers could support students as they learn about the varieties of English that exist across the United States and take a deeper look at their own unique dialect. It was crucial for my students to understand that their home discourse, in this case VE, is not any less important than SAE. By this I mean that language is a tool for mediation. Through language we communicate with others to express our own thoughts and ideas. The language of the home, or community, therefore serves as a very important tool of communication. The language that is taught in schools is a “standard” that is used by our education system to produce curriculum materials and create educational standards that serve the broad community. It does not take into account the individual needs of many of our emergent bilinguals or other students whose home discourse differs from the school discourse.

In Chapter 2, I will describe Village English and Standard Academic English and I will connect the current literature that surrounds sociolinguistics, translanguaging, task-based language teaching and the design cycle to my research. In Chapter 3, I will discuss my research methodology. Chapter 4 will describe my data analysis procedures and results. Lastly, Chapter 5 will reflect on my research and propose further implications.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

My research investigated what fifth grade students noticed about language variations while building a digital lexicon. Students were explicitly instructed on language variations and then learned about their own dialect prior to creating their digital lexicon. This chapter presents the relevant literature that guided my research. Those topics include meaning making and the design cycle, multimodal meaning making, translanguaging, Yup'ik influenced English and Village English, and current research around sociolinguistic awareness. My study focuses on how teachers can build student awareness of language variations in order to help students make meaning during the learning process, thus bridging the gap between home discourse and school discourse.

Meaning Making

The meaning making process is how students are able to make sense of what they are learning. As learners internalize information, they are adjusting their schema to make sense of the new information. According to Mcvee, Dunsmore, and Gavelek (2005), schema is the pre-existing thoughts or ideas that someone currently has on a topic or idea. Schema theory has provided significant insights into an individual's meaning making processes by highlighting the role of language as a mediating tool (Mcvee, Dunsmore, & Gavelek, 2005). In schools, learners create meaning through interacting with teachers and peers. During the meaning making process a learner is presented with information and they interact by means of identifying previous schema and re-organizing that schema to adapt to the new information. Thus, learning occurs. Schema is a learners' prior knowledge and perceived perceptions. In order for true meaning making to occur a learner must make connections and build upon one's preexisting schema.

A project was initiated in New London, New Hampshire in 1994 to consider what would need to be taught in a rapidly changing future and how it needed to be taught to an increasingly diverse population (Cope & Kalantzis, 2008). Researchers in the field of literacy came together to tackle this issue. They identified that English was becoming an increasingly common world language, but variations were arising all over the country. From the work of the New London Group (1996), the group of researchers mentioned above, the term “Multiliteracies” was developed. Multiliteracies is an approach to meaning making that aims to make education more culturally, linguistically, communicative and technologically diverse. One aspect of meaning making within the Multiliteracies framework is the design cycle.

Design Cycle

The design cycle of available designs, designing and the redesigned is a way to conceptualize meaning making (Cope & Kalantzis, 2008). Learners are able to make meaningful connections through the design cycle. The Multiliteracies view of the design cycle has three aspects:

- The Available Designs, found representational forms.
- The Designing one does, the work they do when they make meaning as they transform the Available Designs.
- The Redesigned, how the world and the person are transformed through the act of Designing. (Cope & Kalantzis, 2008, p. 12)

Learners are gaining knowledge as they make sense of the available designs. Available designs are what the learner has available to them that will lead them to learning and making meaning for themselves. For example, available designs might include a written text. A learner will read that text with their own preconceived notions of the content, or schema. As the learner

adjusts their schema with the new information, they are designing. Through this process learners are making meaning in a way that is comprehensible and individualized. During the designing, the learner takes the new information and develops opinions about the topic. It is their thoughts about what their learning means in their own life. Once they have completed the designing process, they have transformed their schema into what is known as the redesigned. This is the learner's transformation as they apply their new knowledge and make connections to the world around them. The redesigned can then serve as a new available design for other learners. In Figure 2.1, I have created a graphic to display the Design Cycle process.

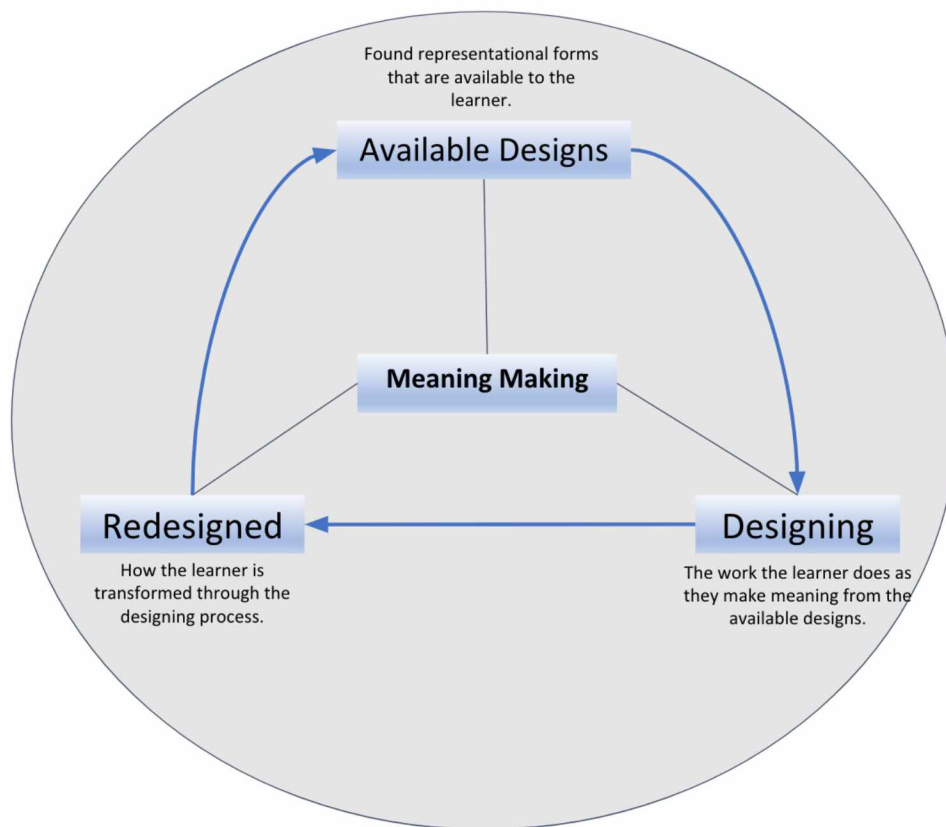


Figure 2.1: Design cycle process

As you can see, all steps of the design cycle connect to meaning making. Throughout the process of the design cycle a learner is making meaning as they work to internalize the

information. The cycle is not necessarily a linear process as learning by nature can be messy. As educators, we must make sure that students have the opportunity to engage in all aspects of the meaning making cycle. We need to give them the time to connect and build understanding during the designing and redesign portions. It is crucial for learners to make their own personal connections and complete the process in order for authentic learning to take place.

Each student brings to the classroom unique experiences from their lives; this concept is known as their funds of knowledge. This is the students' own personal expertise. As the student works through the design cycle their funds of knowledge is a critical component that brings their personal beliefs and the new information together as they make meaning. As stated by Moll, Amanti, Neff, and González (1992), funds of knowledge represent a person's unique expertise. This expertise may look very different from one person to another. For instance, a person who is an expert at hunting and trapping wild game along the Kuskokwim River embodies a strong knowledge base for the skills necessary to not only hunt but clean and dress the animals, navigate the river and survival skills. This person has an expertise that is unique to them. This is their funds of knowledge. It is important for educators to recognize that each student has a unique funds of knowledge and it is important for each student to be able to connect what they are learning to their own life, experiences and funds of knowledge. As cited in (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & González, 1992, p. 133) the term *funds of knowledge* is used to refer to cultural knowledge and acquired skills necessary for an individual's well-being that they have accumulated from life teachings and experiences. The individual knowledge students bring to the classroom is important and valued and assists them in their personal meaning making process of understanding different content. One way teachers can connect students' funds of knowledge to the classroom is to bring in the students' different language varieties and dialects.

Overall, the big idea of the New London Group meeting was to focus on the changing world and the new demands being placed upon people as makers of meaning. The group decided to look at two major shifts that were occurring at a global level. First, was the increasing cultural and linguistic diversity occurring across the world. They were looking at what was appropriate education for a variety of culturally and linguistically diverse peoples. Second, was the influence of increasing technological advancements.

Cope and Kalantzis (2008) revisited the work of the New London Group. They were interested in the growing significance of two dimensions of literacies, the multilingual and the multimodal. As the world changes the communications environment changes and it seemed to Cope and Kalantzis that literacy teaching would have to change as well.

Figure 2.2 shows how the Design Cycle/Meaning Making processes connect to the current literature of this research study, and displays how both the educator and the learners are working through this process.

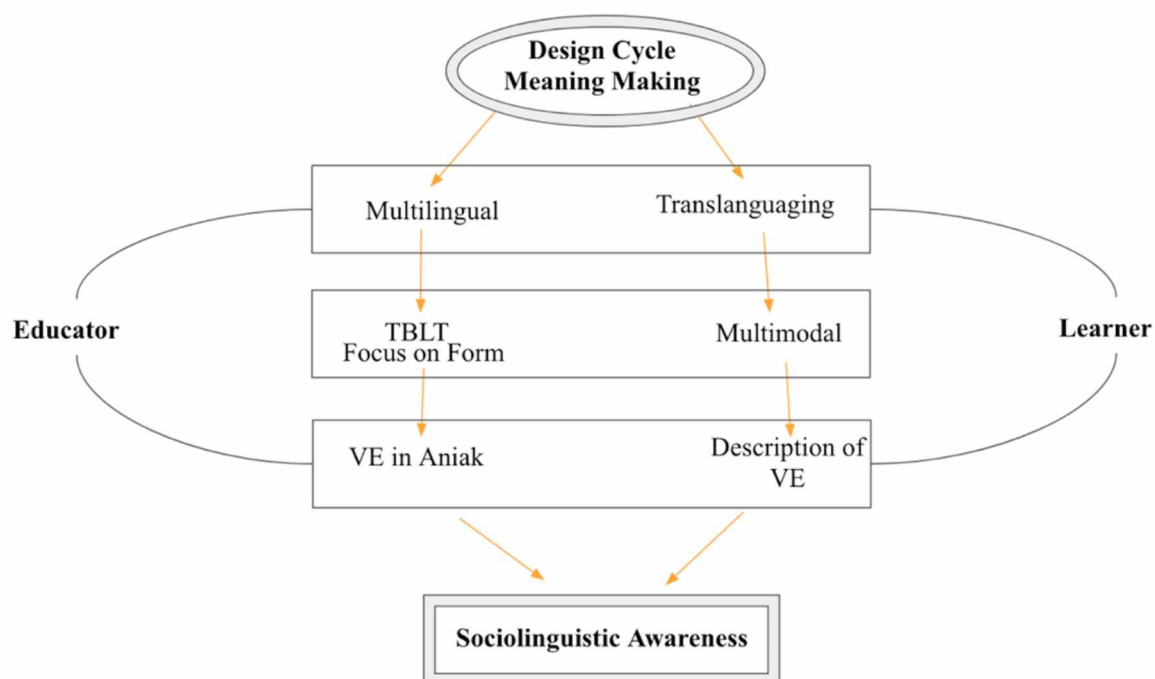


Figure 2.2: Design cycle and meaning making process of educator and learner

In Figure 2.2, the left side represents the educator during the design cycle and meaning making process and the right side represents the learner through the design cycle and meaning making process. Both the educator and the learner move forward through this process to develop sociolinguistic awareness.

The educator draws on the multilingual aspect of multiliteracies as they teach the students about language variations that exist within English. Next, they can incorporate Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) and focus on form in order to lead the students through tasks that teach the students about their own unique dialect, Village English (VE). Lastly, the educator assists the students in creating a list of Village English terms that are commonly used in Aniak. The students are then tasked with creating a digital lexicon comparing the Village English terms and Standard Academic English definitions, or in some cases the lack of SAE definitions.

The learner engages in translanguaging as they are regularly using and navigating home discourse (Village English) and school discourse (Standard Academic English). Students are unknowingly switching between VE and SAE as they make meaning from what is being taught at school through the use of multimodal representations that teach the students about the variety of dialects within the English language. Lastly, students work to make sense of their own dialect, VE, and how it compares to SAE. This process leads both the educator and the students to sociolinguistic awareness.

Multilingual Meaning Making

Both educators and students are engaged in the multilingual meaning making experience. As shown in Figure 2.2 the educator draws on the multilingual component of the multiliteracies framework, while the learners engage in translanguaging (I will talk more about translanguaging in the next section). Educators are tasked with navigating both themselves and their students through the design cycle of meaning making. Students are exposed to new information from the teacher and are led through the design cycle. In this section I will discuss how multilingual meaning making impacts both the educator and the learner.

Multilingualism refers to multiple languages and multiple varieties within a language. Yet, traditional literacy curriculum taught a single version of standard English, thus causing the meaning making process to be more difficult for learners who were having to negotiate discourse differences (Cope & Kalantzis, 2008). In my classroom, I have students who speak a dialectal variation of English known as Village English (VE). During group work and other collaboration times I believe it is important to not limit my students to speaking in Standard Academic English (SAE). As a result, students are able to use their full linguistic repertoire to create meaningful connections, meaning that students are able to use their full range of language abilities when they

are creating meaning. Teachers can support students in the meaning making process by ensuring that instructional practices support the language of the learner, thus bridging the gap between home discourse and school discourse. The language of the learner is the language spoken on a daily basis within the home, which can be a different language or it can be a dialectal variation of a language:

A major concept within the idea of academic language is the ability to use the appropriate academic register. Students use different registers for different types of communication. The spoken academic register for the classroom is more formal than the playground register. Text messaging on cell phones is very different from writing a paper in class. Students need to be able to distinguish the difference between formal and informal registers and use them appropriately both in and out of the classroom. (Hirai, Borrego, Garza, & Kloock, 2013, p. 31)

A register refers to a person's linguistic range when speaking to certain groups of people in different situations. Wheeler and Swords (2016) state that "understanding the nature of language variation (across region, ethnic identity, social class, language styles and registers) provides language arts teachers with a fertile ground from which to build a welcoming, multicultural language arts classroom" (p. 471). When educators understand and accept language variations in their classrooms, they are being inclusive and model acceptance of language variations. This also opens the classroom discourse for conversations about sociolinguistic variations.

People switch their register depending on who they are talking to. This is known as code switching. Code switching is defined by Wheeler (2008) as when students assess the needs of a setting, and intentionally choose the appropriate language for that setting. Code switching can

refer to different languages but it can also refer to differentiating between dialects. According to Wheeler (2008), code switching builds cognitive flexibility because students are thinking about their own language in both formal and informal ways. Students are able to understand contexts that they are placed in socially and adapt their language to meet the needs of that context. Most people unknowingly switch registers when they speak to certain people. For example, some people will speak to a baby differently than they would speak to an adult; similarly, when you address the president of the United States, you will speak differently than if you were addressing a close friend.

The ability to understand registers and code-switching is crucial for students to understand how to go from home discourse to school discourse. Students who understand that they have different registers will be able to identify when and where they should be using the different registers. For example, on a quiz in Social Studies a student who understands registers will know to switch to school discourse to answer the quiz questions while a student who does not know about registers will continue to use their home discourse to answer the questions and may therefore receive a lower score based on the language they used and not based on their content knowledge. Unfortunately, this is what many standardized test scores look like for emergent bilinguals. Standardized tests generally do not take into account a student's home discourse, as they are a generic test that requires Standard Academic English (SAE) responses.

Translanguaging.

It is important for language to not become a barrier in learning, it should actually enhance learning. Translanguaging presented by García, Johnson, Seltzer, and Valdés (2017) is a newly formulated concept that enables learners to use their full linguistic repertoire while proceeding through the meaning making process. In doing this the learner is not limited to producing only

the target language, but they are allowed to use all of their linguistic repertoire; that is, their full range of language capabilities, be it their native language or second language. Below, I have included how García and Kleyn (2016) introduce the scaffolding and transformative stance of a translanguaging approach in school.

Stance: a teacher's philosophical understanding of the structure of the school which would include how language is used.

- scaffolding stance: “the inclusion of the child’s full language repertoire is only temporary” to build comprehension in other language.
- transformative stance: “using the child’s full repertoire will transform the language hierarchies in schools.” (García & Kleyn, 2017, p. 21)

These two stances both recognize that students should use their full language repertoire to make meaning. However, the scaffolding stance believes that including the full language repertoire is temporary, and only used to build the students’ understanding and comprehension in the other desired language. The transformative stance allows the inclusion of the students’ language repertoire throughout their schooling and calls for schools to change their hierarchies to meet students’ linguistic needs.

During group work and other collaboration times I do not limit my students to speaking in SAE. Students are able to use their full linguistic repertoire to create meaningful connections as they work through the design cycle process. Students use their dialect as they are constructing meaning. They also currently use their dialect to convey that meaning to me. In the next section I will discuss multimodal meaning making in relation to student learning.

Multimodal meaning making

Both educators and learners engage in multimodal meaning making. When the educator presents information in the different modes, students are engaged in the learning process. Through the multiliteracies approach, multimodal meaning making is represented through multimodalities such as the linguistic, audio, visual, gestural and spatial modes of meaning (Healy, 2008). These modes assist learners in helping them make sense of and become engaged in the learning. In my classroom, I use a multimodal approach to teach reading. I have students listen to an oral reading of a text as they follow along in their books as well as present a video with the text and oral reading. In this process, I am using audio, visual, and linguistic modes. In doing this I not only hope to engage the learners but I also hope that the learners are assisted in their meaning making process by use of the various modes. This example presents the information to the learner in a range of modalities thus making it a multimodal approach to teaching literacy. Another example of a multimodal approach to teaching language was George (2016), who used a story-based approach to teaching English grammar to her Yup'ik students. In her study, she chose a culturally relevant story as an available design for her students. Throughout the meaning making activities, George had the students use props, songs and other resources that could be observed, handled, and heard. In her study, the students drew on the audio, visual, gestural, spatial, and linguistic modes as they were learning English grammar. George (2016, p. 28) overall found that this integrative approach led to the students' active participation and increased motivation.

As part of a multimodal approach, the present study focuses on using technology to enhance learning. Utilizing technology allows the use of multiple modalities at once. For instance, by using the Book Creator App students are able to define a word by writing a

definition, recording themselves explaining the definition with an example, creating a video of the meaning of the word and drawing a picture to further explain the word. In this study, the Aniak Digital Lexicon Book Creator project utilizes an iPad to enable students to create their own audio, drawings, text and manipulate images to create the pages of their book. This allows students to engage in the various modes of meaning making (audio, visual, linguistic, spatial) as they create their digital lexicon books. While students are creating their book, they are learning about the linguistic differences between SAE and VE. This follows the task-based language teaching (TBLT) and focus on form (FonF) approach to teaching about language features through a content focused task. This project also enables student to translanguage as they work with a partner to develop their definitions for the terms. This allows students to thus make meaning as they notice the differences and similarities between SAE and VE. This can in turn build their sociolinguistic awareness.

Task-based language teaching.

Task-based language teaching (TBLT) engages learners in meaning focused communication. Learners are engaged in communication through the performance of tasks. According to Ellis (2003) “a task is an activity which requires learners to use language, with the emphasis on meaning to attain an objective, and which is chosen so that it is most likely to provide information for learners and teachers which will help them in their own learning” (p. 9). Learners will perform a task through the use of language that conveys meaning and form. Thus, a task will have learners producing some form of language, which makes language learning more incidental. Tasks allow learners to decide what language forms will be used. It is also crucial for tasks to reflect a real-world situation. This provides the learner with an experience that is meaningful and authentic. Authentic experiences are something in which the learner is able to

make a more personal or meaningful connection with the topic or idea being taught. It is not rote memorization.

Ellis (2018, p. 106) proposed four key characteristics of TBLT:

1. The primary focus is on meaning.
2. There is some kind of gap.
3. Learners need to use their own linguistic and non-linguistic resources.
4. There is an outcome other than the display of language.

Task-based language learning is when the instructional approach to teaching is student centered with the main focus on a task that the learner needs to complete. For example, if the language focus was on adding the correct plural ending to a noun, such as adding 's' to 'dog' in the sentence 'the dogs were barking loudly,' a task would be to have the student look at an image of pictures and to write captions for the images to practice sequencing. When the student arrives at the image of the dogs the educator will help guide the students to describe what is going on in the image. The content focus of this task is sequencing while the language focus is not explicit but an intended focus could be adding the correct plural ending to nouns. The primary focus is on students making meaning through sequencing. When the student attempts to describe the image of the dogs a gap is present. This is known as the Noticing and Awareness phase described by Ellis (2003). Once the gap (vocabulary, grammar, pragmatics, etc.) is recognized by the learner they will attempt to fill the said gap. The learner uses their own linguistic and non-linguistic resources to attempt to fill the gap – the learner accesses their full linguistic repertoire to create their own captions for the images, as opposed to being asked to complete fill-in-the-blank or word matching exercises. The outcome is for the student to have a series of sequenced images that they can create a story with.

In the next section I will describe what the dialectal variation of English looks like in Aniak, Alaska. In Aniak people speak a non-standard form of English known as Village English (VE). This variation derives from the Native Yup'ik language of Yugtun. I will discuss this further in the next section.

Description of Village English

Village English is the coined term for how people use language in the small communities that are located in rural Alaska. Most of these communities are accessible only by plane as there are no roads to travel to other villages or cities. For the most part people in these communities have been isolated from the outside world. Today there are many forms of technology that have connected rural communities from the outside world. In Aniak for instance, the first cell phone tower was built in 2011. Now, almost everyone has a cell phone in Aniak. Cable television and internet are also accessible here in Aniak. In 2017 3G wireless internet became available in Aniak making it even easier to connect, although it is very expensive. Travel has also increased as there are daily flights to Anchorage and Bethel which allows people to travel with more ease. In the winter, the river freezes and large plows create an ice road that allows residents to travel the frozen river as far as 100 miles to Bethel, Alaska. Bethel is the closest large community to Aniak. Bethel has grocery stores, restaurants, a hospital, a movie theater and the University of Alaska Fairbanks Kuskokwim campus, among many other things.

The English spoken in my area was influenced by the Yup'ik language, known as Yugtun, that was spoken by the native Alaskans from the region. Today English is the predominant language in Aniak, only a few elders speak Yugtun. The variation of English spoken in my area is considered a dialect of English. Dialect can be defined as “any variety of a language that is shared by a group of speakers” (Wolfram & Schilling, 2016, p. 2). Another term

commonly used to refer to the dialect spoken throughout Southwest Alaska, but which can often carry a negative undertone, is Village English (VE). VE is the term used for the non-standard form of English used typically in villages around Alaska. This variation of English was influenced by the native language of the Yup'ik people of the area. Jacobson (1984) describes the differences by stating:

Many of the grammatical characteristics of Yup'ik-influenced English which outsiders notice because they diverge sharply from standard English are the result of relatively minor grammatical differences between the language, where the Yup'ik speaker is speaking English according to some Yup'ik pattern. Like the phonological features ("accent") of this dialect of English, its grammatical features may occur in the speech of those who do not speak Yup'ik but grow up in a Yup'ik area. (p. 18)

In Aniak there is hardly any Yugtun spoken. There may be a few grandparents who are fluent in Yugtun and the kids today only know a few words or phrases. But, the language shift from Yugtun to English is still present in the local language spoken. Some of the common grammatical shifts that Jacobson identifies are illustrated in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1: Yup'ik grammar and local English according to Jacobson (1984)

Phenomena	Description	Examples
“Let” as a Causative	“Let” is used in place of a number of different auxiliary verbs in English, including “let”, “make”, and “have”.	“I forgot to let my mom sign this.” “Let him stop hurting me!”
Nouns as Verbs	Certain English nouns may be treated as verbs with an auxiliary “go”.	“I have to go toilet.” “He wants to go college.”
“Even” as a Conditional	The conjunctions “even if” and “even though” are both replaced by the single word “even”.	“Even it rained we went.” “Even we lost we had fun.”
Verb Tense	Tenses in Yup'ik are expressed through postbases, but the tenses in Yup'ik do not quite match the tenses the English tense system.	“We always use them.” “We never eat yet.”
Articles	Yup'ik does not have articles corresponding to English “a” and “the”.	“He went store.”
Changes in Meaning	When a Yup'ik word's meaning is similar to but not exactly that of an English word, the English word sometimes is taken as if it did correspond exactly, resulting in local meanings for certain English words that differ slightly from their standard uses.	“To be lazy.” (lazy right now, not a permanent state of being lazy)

Village English in Aniak.

In Aniak the majority of residents speak a non-standard dialect of English commonly referred to as Village English (VE). Aniak is a small rural village in Alaska located along the Kuskokwim river. There are no roads that connect Aniak to other villages or cities. Because of this isolation Aniak residents have developed their own way communicating. If you travel along

the Kuskokwim river, by boat in the summer and by snowmachine (aka snowmobile) in the winter, you will find that each village has some similarities and vast differences in their version of VE. Many of these differences include vocabulary, which is also called lexicon. Some examples include “steam,” which means to take a steam bath or sauna. In other villages along the Kuskokwim river this is called many different things such as: *maqi*, steam and sauna.

Prior to conducting my research, I took a course at the University of Alaska Fairbanks where I learned about linguistic analysis. During that course, I was tasked with creating an etymological dictionary for common words used in Aniak. Table 2.2 displays some of the words that I included in this dictionary.

Table 2.2: Lexicon-develop ‘etymological dictionary’ of terms in Aniak

<p>bike /baɪk/ (noun) ‘a four-wheeled motorized vehicle used for travel.’</p> <p>Derives from the word ‘bicycle’ as reference to a mode of travel. Origins are from the late 19th Century abbreviation for bicycle. The word <i>bike</i> is commonly used to refer a four-wheeler. (https://www.merriam-webster.com/)</p> <p><i>Did you drive your bike to school?</i> ‘Did you drive your four-wheeler to school?’ <i>Is that your green bike?</i> ‘Is that your green bike?’</p>
<p>bum /bʌm/ noun ‘to refer to something as being lame or boring; of poor quality; bad or wrong.’</p> <p>Probably derives from the term of a person who ‘bums’ around not doing much of anything. Origin is from mid 19th century probably from ‘bummer’. May derive from the word ‘bummed’, which means to travel with no particular purpose or destination. In this dialect ‘bum’ refers to an object or a person as being boring, lame or stupid. (http://www.etymonline.com/)</p> <p><i>That is a bum movie.</i> ‘That is a boring movie.’ <i>Stop being so bum.</i> ‘Stop being so lame.’</p>

Table 2.2 continued

<p>camp /kæmp/ (verb) ‘to temporarily stay the night at someone else’s house.’</p> <p>Derives from American English term ‘to encamp’ which means to live for a time in a camp, tent, or camper, as when on vacations. This term is used to refer to sleeping over at someone else’s house. This term encompasses the meaning of staying the night somewhere other than at your own house. (https://www.merriam-webster.com/)</p> <p><i>Can I camp at your house?</i> ‘Can I stay the night at your house?’ <i>Can I camp with you?</i> ‘Can I stay the night with you?’</p>
<p>come /kʌm/ verb ‘move or travel toward or into a place.’</p> <p>Derives from Old English cuman “come, approach, land; come to oneself, recover; arrive; assemble.” May also be used as a command in this dialect ‘try come’ meaning you want someone to come over to you. (https://www.merriam-webster.com/)</p> <p><i>Try come.</i> ‘Will you move towards me?’ <i>How you come?</i> ‘How did you get here?’</p>
<p>half-off /hæfɒf/ (noun) ‘not all there (not 100% cognitive ability).’</p> <p>Probably derives from labels at stores discounting the pricing on items that are nearly or close to expirations and/or damaged. This term has been used to describe people who are not at full mental capacity. (https://www.merriam-webster.com/)</p> <p><i>This homework is half-off!</i> ‘This homework is not good!’ <i>Gee! So half-off you are.</i> ‘Gee! So not all there you are.’</p>
<p>short pants /ʃɔɪt pænts/ (noun) a pair of pants measuring a short distance from end to end.</p> <p>Derives from English use of ‘short’ and ‘pants’ combined to form a new noun rather than as an adjective + noun. This term was formed to differentiate between ‘shorts’ and ‘pants.’ A long pair of clothing covering your legs is referred to as ‘pants’ and anything that is cut shorter, usually at the knee, is referred to as ‘short pants.’ Origin is of Old English. (http://www.etymonline.com/)</p> <p><i>I forgot my short pants for practice today.</i> ‘I forgot my shorts for practice today.’ <i>I need some short pants.</i> ‘I need some shorts.’</p>

Table 2.2 continued

<p>pedal bike /pɛd baɪk/ (noun) ‘a vehicle composed of two wheels held in a frame one behind the other, propelled by pedals and steered with handlebars attached to the front wheel also known as a bicycle.’</p> <p>Derives from the Greek word ‘bicycle’ with bi- “two” + Greek kyklos “circle, wheel”. Origins are from the mid 19th century; ‘bike’ is the abbreviation of ‘bicycle’. Pedal is referring to the foot pedal that is used to propel the bicycle forward. ‘Pedal bike’ is used to differentiate from the word ‘bike’ which refers to a four-wheeler in this dialect. (http://www.etymonline.com/)</p> <p><i>I went by pedal bike.</i> ‘I used a bicycle’ <i>Did you come by pedal bike?</i> ‘Did you use your bicycle to get here?’</p>

Table 2.2 breaks down some of the common lexical items in Aniak. I was curious about these terms as I would hear them often but until creating this etymological dictionary, I did not truly know what they meant or how they were derived. This is the assignment that truly piqued my interest in finding out more about dialect and specifically lexicon. This led me to develop my teacher action research to focus on dialect and lexicon.

As I learned more about dialects within the context of education, I had begun to see that students who speak non-standard varieties of English are apt to face discrimination in many scenarios (Wolfram & Schilling, 2016; Adger, Wolfram, & Christian, 2007), and while educators have a responsibility to fight such intolerance and teach acceptance and understanding of others whenever possible, they cannot change the harsh reality that many students will face. For example, Smith (2013) completed a research project that focused on Standard English dialect instruction that respects language diversity. Smith concluded that because the standard dialect is the language of power in the USA, and students need to negotiate codes of power in order to be successful, active citizens, it is the responsibility of public schools to teach the standard dialect to prepare students to be active members of society. Smith (2013) therefore argues that teachers

must teach students how the standard language is written and spoken. This led me to the idea of building sociolinguistic awareness in the classroom.

Sociolinguistic Awareness

Sociolinguistic awareness can be defined as the understanding and awareness of different sociolinguistic variables during communication. Sociolinguistic awareness may include register awareness – such as knowing different patterns and elements of formal versus informal speech and understanding the appropriate times to use each. Sociolinguistic awareness may also include dialect awareness – for example, knowing that there may be language varieties depending on region. Several researchers have investigated sociolinguistic awareness and its implications in the classroom.

One such study examined the effect of instruction on language learners' sociolinguistic awareness (van Compernelle & Williams, 2013). The authors define sociolinguistic awareness as “awareness or knowledge of variable L2 forms (e.g., lexical, grammatical, phonological variables) and of their social and/or stylistic significance in relation to contexts of use, social relationships, and personal identities” (van Compernelle & Williams, 2013, p. 298). In this study, the researchers examined how different types of instruction influenced language learners' sociolinguistic awareness of whether or not to use the negative marker *ne* in French. van Compernelle and Williams found that explicit instruction benefitted their learners' sociolinguistic awareness, as long as there was a strong link between awareness-raising and task performance during the instruction (2013, p. 305). In other words, the researchers found that it was not enough to simply raise the students' awareness of the sociolinguistic variable, it was necessary that this awareness was integrated into the communicative tasks during instruction.

Another approach to developing sociolinguistic awareness is through the development of Dialect Awareness Programs, which refer to “activities that are intended to promote an understanding of, and appreciation for, language variation” (Wolfram & Schilling, 2016, p. 337). In developing a curriculum on dialect awareness, Wolfram and Schilling (2016, pp. 351-358) propose the following themes:

1. Units on dialects should focus on the “naturalness” of language variation
2. Students should examine dialects in their own community
3. Students need to play an active role to document their dialect
4. Dialect units should encourage students to see that dialects have patterns
5. Dialect units should show students how dialects connect to other fields (e.g., geography, history, cultural studies)
6. Students should be given the opportunity to reflect on their language use in different situations

In my study, I have attempted to incorporate as many of these themes as possible to maximize the learning opportunities for my students: I showed the students that language variation occurs throughout the United States and elsewhere, and that language varieties happen naturally. By investigating the dialect of our own community, I encouraged the students to play an active role to document their dialect in a digital lexicon project. Throughout our dialect unit, I also gave the students many opportunities to think carefully about how they use their language in different situations. Additionally, in following van Compernelle and Williams (2013), my intention was to ensure that there were strong connections between the awareness-raising instruction and the tasks that the students did during the instruction.

Conclusion

During my study, the process of building students' sociolinguistic awareness first began with the introduction that language variations existed within the English language. Once students became aware of this, they were led through activities to help them understand the differences between their own variation of English, VE, and the language used in the classroom, SAE.

Through the multiliteracies approach, multimodal meaning making is represented through multimodalities such as the linguistic, audio, visual, gestural and spatial modes of meaning (Healy, 2008). These modes assist learners in helping them make sense and helping them become engaged in the learning. Modes have a range according to the interest of the communicator, who in this case the educator, modes are chosen for the best means for the learner to create meaning. In my classroom, I use multimodal ways to teach reading. I have students listen to an oral reading of a text as they follow along in their books as well as present a video with the text and oral reading. In this process, I am using audio and visual modes. In doing this I not only hope to engage the learners but I also hope that the learners are assisted in their meaning making process by use of the various modes. This example presents the information to the learner in a range of modalities thus making it a multimodal approach to teaching literacy. George (2016) used a story-based approach to teaching grammar to Yup'ik students. In her study, she had students using a culturally relevant story that had students making meaning through the use of props, songs and other resources that can be observed, handled, and heard.

This study focuses on using technology to enhance learning. Utilizing technology allows the use of multiple modalities at once. For instance, by using the Book Creator App students are able to define a word by writing a definition, recording themselves explaining the definition with an example, creating a video of the meaning of the word and drawing a picture to further explain

the word. In this study, the Aniak Digital Lexicon Book Creator project utilizes an iPad where students are able to create their own audio, drawings, text and manipulate images to create the pages of their book. This allows students to use a multimodal approach to meaning making as they create their digital lexicon books. While students are creating their book, they are learning about the linguistic differences between SAE and VE. This follows the TBLT and FonF approach to teaching about language features through a content focused task. During this project students will be translanguaging as they work with a partner to develop their definitions for the terms. Students will also be counterbalancing between the language focus and the content focus of the project as they define their VE terms and find the equivalent SAE term. Students will be making meaning as they notice the differences and similarities between SAE and VE. This will build their sociolinguistic awareness.

The studies reviewed in this chapter provide insight into how knowledge of language variation and dialect awareness among students and teacher, along with specific instruction in standard language forms, can help improve the acquisition of Standard English dialect in a way that does not stigmatize nonstandard dialects. In Chapter 3 I will address the research methodology that I followed during my study.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

This study focuses on how a teacher can build students' linguistic awareness and what fifth graders notice about linguistic variation in our village while building a digital lexicon. The purpose of this study is to bring about awareness of language variation to both teachers and students and to help teachers adapt instruction to meet students linguistic and educational needs. This chapter introduces my research questions and methodology. I also describe my research setting and my instructional plan during the research process.

Research Questions

My study focused on language awareness. Students were instructed on formal language and informal language. The students learned key words such as: dialect, code-switching, registers and lexicon. Students were engaged in activities to learn about language variations that exist in the United States of America. Students were then asked to think about how they themselves use language. My inquiry as to what fifth graders notice about linguistic variation in our village while building a digital lexicon, led me to three main research questions:

Research Questions

1. What does Village English (VE) look like in Aniak?
2. What did I do to help my students learn about Aniak lexicon/VE?
3. What did my students learn about Aniak lexicon/VE?

Study Design

This study follows a teacher action research (TAR) approach. TAR is an approach to research that allows the teacher to conduct research within their own classroom. It is a way for teachers to look at their teaching practices through a critical stance. This allows teachers to

identify areas of strength and areas of potential growth. TAR is a process that enables growth among the teacher researcher and other educators.

My study also follows a constructivist grounded theory (CGT) analytical framework. This is a flexible framework that allows continuous data analysis throughout the research study. Data collection, coding and memo writing are some key components of analysis in this framework. In the following sections, I define and describe both TAR and CGT and explain how they connect to my research.

Teacher action research.

Teacher action research (TAR) is the process of teacher inquiry that leads teachers to gather information about how they teach and how well their students learn. The teacher engages in research in order to gain insight and produce positive changes in the education system while improving student learning and relevance. "By now it should be evident that educational change that enhances the lives of children is a main goal of action research. But action research can also enhance the lives of professionals" (Mills, 2018, p. 13). TAR is about developing professionals who continue to gain knowledge and develop a reflective practice to better themselves for their students.

TAR involves a teacher conducting research in their own classroom. The TAR process consists of four steps: identify an area of focus, collect data, analyze and interpret data, and then develop an action plan (Mills, 2014). This process involves teachers taking a critical stance to their own teaching practices. In taking a critical stance a teacher is able to reflect upon their teaching and develop an action plan to better their instructional practices. Since TAR focuses on student learning it moves beyond just teacher reflection and focuses on how teacher actions are related to student learning.

TAR is the process of teachers trying strategies or techniques with their classrooms and determining their effectiveness in order to better their instruction. Throughout the TAR process a teacher researcher learns about themselves as an educator. As teacher researchers engage in TAR, they are continual learners in their classrooms and in their practice. Table 3.1 elaborates on how my study relates to the characteristics of TAR. Teachers are able to conduct their own study in their own classroom thus providing them with decision making authority. A commitment is made in the TAR process that enables the teacher to grow professionally and contribute to the professional community.

Table 3.1: Characteristics of TAR in this study (Mills, 2018, pp. 15-16)

Characteristics of TAR according to Mills	Characteristics of TAR in my research
Teacher researchers have decision making authority.	As the teacher researcher, I was able to choose when to conduct my research and adapt my plan in accordance with student needs.
Teacher researchers are committed to continued professional development and school improvement.	This TAR has developed my understanding of how students utilize language in the classroom.
Teacher researchers want to reflect on their practices.	TAR enabled me to look closely at my practices of teaching formal and informal language in my classroom.
Teacher researchers will choose an area of focus, determine data collection techniques, analyze and interpret data, and develop action plans.	The process of TAR provided me with the steps to collect and analyze data, which informed my teaching practice implementations.

A critical component of TAR is the reflective stance and "the willingness to critically examine one's teaching in order to improve or enhance it. It is about a commitment to the principle that as a teacher one is always far from the ideal but is striving toward it anyway--it's the very nature of education!" (Mills, 2018, p. 13). During my study, I took a critical stance to my teaching and identified areas of promise and areas of needed growth. I was able to recognize

my strengths and my shortcomings, which is a crucial component to growth. Mills (2018) described this process as:

When teachers gain new understanding about both their own and their students' behaviors through action research, they are empowered to improve teaching in several ways: Make informed decisions about what to change and what not to change. Link prior knowledge to new information. Learn from experience (even failures). Ask questions and systematically find answers. (p. 18)

Through TAR educators try new strategies or techniques in their classroom and determine their effectiveness. TAR is about professional learning and building a professional learning community. Educators share their hypotheses and findings through research articles, theses and projects so that other educators can learn from that teacher's TAR. In this way, it establishes a professional learning community.

TAR must be completed over time and an appropriate amount of data must be collected in order to address the research question. This ensures the credibility and trustworthiness of the study. This study was conducted over a time of three months. The total time of data collection was 16 days. Data collection comprised of audio and video recordings, observations and student artifacts. Using multiple sources of data is referred to as triangulation and is an important factor in ensuring that the study does not rely on only one source of data. Table 3.2 displays how I used triangulation in my data collection process.

Table 3.2: Triangulation matrix

	Data Source	Data Source	Data Source
Research Questions	1	2	3
1. What does Village English (VE) look like in Aniak?	Class generated lexicon	Video of class discussions	Audio of partner lexicon project
2. What did I do to help my students learn about Aniak lexicon/VE?	Audio of instruction	Video recording of instruction	Student artifacts, teacher journal
3. What did my students learn about Aniak lexicon/VE?	Audio recordings	Video Recordings	Student artifacts

TAR was an appropriate approach because it allowed for reflection of my own teaching. I have been making informed decisions in my classroom on a day to day basis but lacked data on language usage between myself and my students. This study allowed me to collect the data I needed to truly reflect upon my practice. I was able to analyze the data collected and reflect on my teaching strategies.

As a culturally responsible teacher I am constantly linking students' prior knowledge, culturally and educationally, in order to enhance their learning of new information. As an educator, I believe it is extremely important to learn from experiences. Mistakes in the classroom can be the greatest lessons for teachers. Overall, I feel that my students benefit from my daily reflection, and the growth I have experienced throughout this study will carry over to my future students and will hopefully help other educators with their language instruction practices. The students are often the true teachers in the classroom.

TAR follows a qualitative approach to research rather than a quantitative approach. A qualitative approach to research follows the guidelines of transferability, credibility, trustworthiness and confirmability. Mills (2018) continues:

Action research is not “garbage research” at the classroom/school level. As teacher researchers, we are challenging the experimental researcher’s view that the only credible

research is that which can be generalized to a larger population. Many examples of teacher research are generalizable to other classroom settings, but the power of action research is not in its generalizability. It is in the relevance of the findings to the researcher or audience of the research. (p. 162)

By conducting my own teacher action research, I gained a deeper understanding of both how my students make meaning and how as an instructor I can support their meaning making process.

Constructivist grounded theory.

The analytic framework of this study follows constructivist grounded theory (CGT). CGT is a cyclical process in which the researcher is continuously interpreting and analyzing qualitative data. Grounded theorists collect data and “bring an open mind to what is happening so that they can learn about the worlds and the people they are studying” (Charmaz, 2014, p. 3). This framework allows the researcher to focus on data and its analysis. “Grounded theory methods consist of systematic, yet flexible guidelines for collecting and analyzing qualitative data to construct theories from the data themselves” (Charmaz, 2014, p. 1). Grounded theorists are constantly going back and forth between data collection and analysis. This process keeps the researcher interacting and involved in their data. It is important for the researcher to be connected to the data throughout the research process. This allows the researcher to continually analyze by constructing theories and testing those theories until saturation of the data occurs. Saturation occurs when the data has been analyzed thoroughly.

According to Charmaz (2014), “as grounded theorists, we study our early data and begin to separate, sort, and synthesize these data through qualitative coding” (p. 4). Grounded theorists conduct data collection and analysis simultaneously in an iterative process (Charmaz, 2014, p. 15). They write early analytic analysis about these codes known as memos. Through early

analysis and memo writing, questions and gaps in our data arise and we seek the data that might answer these questions (Charmaz, 2014, p. 4). The researcher creates analytic categories and theoretical sampling takes place as the researcher strives to make sense of the data. During theoretical sampling the researcher begins constructing tentative ideas about the data, and then examines these ideas through further empirical inquiry (Charmaz, 2014, p. 199). Grounded theorists then write up their findings concentrating on their analysis.

CGT is compatible with TAR because they both are cyclical processes that are systematic and data driven. Both CGT and TAR recognize the researcher's interpretation and Charmaz (2014) describes this as:

A constructivist approach theorizes the interpretive work that research participants do, but also acknowledges that the resulting theory is an interpretation. The theory depends on the researcher's view; it does not and cannot stand outside of it. (p. 239)

Throughout analysis the researcher must maintain an open mind as they go back and forth between data and analysis. In doing this the researcher is gaining insights into their data that will further advance analysis.

TAR is the process of creating and addressing a question to research. CGT provides a structure for analyzing and interpreting data. TAR supports CGT by focusing on student data to guide the researcher through analysis and ultimately presenting their findings. Table 3.3 outlines how CGT was used in my TAR.

Table 3.3: My TAR and CGT

Steps of CGT according to Charmaz (2014, p. 15)	How I used the steps in my TAR
1. Collect and analyze data repeatedly.	Data were collected over a three-month span and analysis was repeated during initial coding and final coding.
2. Analyze what the participants do and say- don't look for patterns yet.	In analyzing, I coded data by adding gerund endings to describe what I thought was happening.
3. Use comparative methods.	Comparing audio, video and student artifacts over time allowed for use of comparative methods.
4. Draw on data to develop new conceptual categories.	After initial coding, data were further reviewed to find patterns and develop categories.
5. Develop inductive abstract analytic categories.	Transcriptions were read several times. I then conducted initial coding, and then developed categories through focused coding.
6. Theory construction.	Categories and patterns were used to develop theories based on what the data were telling me.
7. Engage in Theoretical sampling.	Theoretical sampling was used by collecting audio and video recordings and student artifacts.
8. Search for variation in the studied categories or process.	Searching for variation occurred during the coding of data and creating categories.
9. Pursue developing a category rather than covering a specific empirical topic.	I focused on elements of what students were learning about language use and identification.

As shown in Table 3.3 the CGT analytical framework complements my research design (TAR) because both CGT and TAR provide the structure and flexibility for teacher researchers to conduct data analysis and develop theories based on the researcher's interpretation of the data. In the following section, I will describe the setting in which I conducted my inquiry.

Setting

The village of Aniak is 92 air miles from Bethel and 317 miles west of Anchorage. The area around Aniak comprises 6.5 square miles of land and 2.3 square miles of water. According to local interpretation Aniak comes from the Yup'ik word Anyaraq meaning, "the place where it

comes out” referring to the mouth of the Aniak River. Aniak is technically an island as the Aniak Slough surrounds the town. Most residents live on the island but some live across the Aniak Slough on the mainland. The majority of families in Aniak live a partial subsistence lifestyle. In the summer and fall months the main subsistence activities include fishing, berry picking, bird hunting and moose hunting. In winter months, the subsistence activities include trapping, wood gathering and hunting moose. The main religions in Aniak are Russian Orthodox and Catholicism.

There are two schools located in Aniak, Auntie Mary Nicoli Elementary School (AMNES) and Aniak Junior Senior High School (AJSHS). The schools are located across town from one another. AMNES is located in the area known as ‘downtown’ and across the street from the river. There are also several other small businesses such as Aniak Light & Power, Alaska Commercial Company, Hound House Restaurant. Aniak also has seasonal guiding businesses that run during the summer months.

This study takes place in a fifth-grade classroom at AMNES located in Aniak, Alaska. AMNES consists of preschool to fifth grade with about 90 students in our building. There are six teachers working in kindergarten through fifth grade. My classroom is comprised of thirteen students. AMNES is one of the oldest school buildings in the state of Alaska. The building itself is one long hallway that has all the classrooms and two separate wings that comprise of the cafeteria and the gymnasium. My classroom is a medium sized room that has large windows along the wall opposite of the entrance. My teacher’s desk is located adjacent to the SmartBoard and along the wall of windows are five computers. In the back of the classroom are shelves loaded with books and a large table for group work. Students’ desks are located in the center of the room and are in groups of four, with one group of five.

Participants

This study focused on thirteen fifth grade students attending Auntie Mary Nicoli Elementary School (AMNES) in Aniak, Alaska. All students have been enrolled at AMNES since Kindergarten. The class of thirteen students consisted of seven girls and six boys. The students ranged in ages of 10-12 years old.

All of my students' first language is English. Students have been learning Yugtun in school but their parents and grandparents do not speak any Yugtun at home. All of my students' families primarily speak in Village English. Table 3.4 provides participants' pseudonyms, grade, gender, ethnicity, dialect and lifestyle. Students who live a more modern-day lifestyle rely less on subsistence foods and travel outside of Aniak on a regular basis. This outside travel provides opportunities to shop at larger grocery stores, such as Costco, and other shopping places such as malls. Students who live a more traditional lifestyle rely more on subsistence foods and do not regularly travel outside of Aniak.

Table 3.4: Participants

Pseudonym	Grade	Gender	Ethnicity	Dialect	Lifestyle
Student A	fifth	Female	Alaska Native Father and Caucasian Mother	Village English	Lives a modern-day lifestyle.
Student B	fifth	Female	Alaska Native Mother and Father	Village English	Lives a more traditional lifestyle.
Student C	fifth	Male	Part Alaska Native and Part Caucasian Mother and Father	Village English	Lives a modern-day lifestyle.
Student D	fifth	Female	Part Alaska Native and Caucasian Mother and Caucasian Father	Village English	Lives a modern-day lifestyle.
Student E	fifth	Female	Alaska Native Mother and Father	Village English	Lives a modern-day lifestyle.
Student F	fifth	Male	Alaska Native Mother and Father	Village English	Lives a more traditional lifestyle.
Student G	fifth	Female	Alaska Native Mother and Father	Village English	Lives a more traditional lifestyle.
Student H	fifth	Male	Alaska Native Mother and Father	Village English	Lives a more traditional lifestyle.
Student I	fifth	Male	Alaska Native Mother and Father	Village English	Lives a more traditional lifestyle.
Student J	fifth	Male	Alaska Native Mother and Father	Village English	Lives a modern-day lifestyle.
Student K	fifth	Male	Part Alaska Native and Part Caucasian Mother and Father	Village English	Lives a modern-day lifestyle.
Student L	fifth	Female	Alaska Native Mother and Father	Village English	Lives a more traditional lifestyle.
Student M	fifth	Female	Part Alaska Native Part Caucasian Mother and Alaska Native Father	Village English	Lives a more traditional lifestyle.

As a researcher participant, I come from a small town in rural Michigan. I moved to Aniak, Alaska in 2011 with my husband, who is also in education. I taught a combined classroom of fifth and 6th grade for six years at Auntie Mary Nicoli Elementary School. This school year, 2018-2019, is the first year I have taught a single grade classroom of fifth grade students.

Instructional Plan

This study was conducted over a span of three months. The study began with students completing an activity known as a KWL. In a KWL students fill out the “K” as what they already know about the topic, or what they think they know, and the “W” refers to what they want to know about the topic. After the lesson is completed students will fill the “L” in with what they learned about the topic. The students were directed to use “dialect” as their topic. Since I knew this would be a completely new topic to the students, we spent about thirty minutes prior to the KWL discussing the word dialect and its meanings. I wanted to briefly introduce them to the word so they would be able to understand what to write down on their KWL. I felt this was appropriate because I knew that the term “dialect” would be completely new to them. I wanted more written down than “I don’t know” for the “K” portion of their KWL. I will go into more detail about the steps taken during this activity in Chapter 4.

The next few days comprised of students being instructed through tasks about the meaning of dialect, register, code-switching and formal and informal language. The culminating activity had students creating a digital lexicon book. In creating this book students were asked to define the VE term and find an SAE equivalent and also define that term. For each term students needed a definition, a picture, a sentence and they needed to record their voices reading the page. Student worked in pre-selected pairs for this project. I selected the pairs based on students who

would not only work well together but I also paired students based on their language abilities. For instance, I tried to pair a more VE speaking student with a more SAE speaking student, but as you can see from Table 3.4 all of my students primarily speak in VE.

Research Procedures

During this study, data were collected during a three-month time span. Prior to collecting data for this teacher action research (TAR) I submitted a proposal to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) (see Appendix A) for approval. After the approval, I sent a letter home to parents explaining the teacher action research I would be conducting in my fifth-grade classroom. After receiving the adult consent form from parents, I provided students with an assent form in class. I read the form to the students and discussed my research project with them. I let the students know that I would use pseudonyms in place of their names, and I also let them know the kinds of activities that they would be doing. Table 3.5 lists the audio/video recordings of the various activities during the project, as well as how long the activities lasted. All data collection occurred in my fifth-grade classroom at Auntie Mary Nicoli Elementary School in Aniak, Alaska.

Table 3.5: Data collection recordings

Date	“Activity”	Group/ students	Approximate length of the recording
10-30-18 <i>Day 1</i>	Plot of Story	All	33 minutes
10-30-18	Sentences	All	15 minutes
11-1-18 <i>Day 2</i>	KWL Group 2 discussion	C, E, M, A	12 minutes
11-1-18	KWL Group 3 discussion	D, F, I, J, B	11 minutes
11-1-18	What is Dialect FINAL discussion	All	17 minutes

Table 3.5 continued

<i>Day 3</i>			
11-26-18 <i>Day 3</i>	Journeys ELA Anchor Text “Old Yeller”	All	25 minutes
11-26-18	Dialogue and Dialect Lesson	All	33 minutes
11-26-18	Smoky Mountain Dialect	All	10 minutes
11-27-18 <i>Day 4</i>	Language and Registers	All	14 minutes
11-27-18	Registers and Dialects Cloze Activity	All	12 minutes
11-28-18 <i>Day 5</i>	Soda/Pop Lesson and Dialects across the USA	All	22 minutes
11-29-18 <i>Day 6</i>	Two Students Reading L7 Old Yeller	D, G	19 minutes
11-29-18	Formal Informal review Pen Pal Letters	All	17 minutes
11-29-18	Cloze activity resumed from 11-26.	All	16 minutes
11-29-18	SAE review and new VE	All	13 minutes
11-30-18 <i>Day 7</i>	Aniak Lexicon and VE	All	18 minutes
12-3-18 <i>Day 8</i>	Aniak Lexicon Completed & Word List part 1	All	33 minutes
12-3-18	Word List part 2	All	7 minutes
12-4-18 <i>Day 9</i>	Book Creator Project start	All	12 minutes
12-4-18	Pair Work part 1	L, M	16 minutes
12-4-18	Pair Work part 1	D, G	13 minutes
12-4-18	Pair Work part 2	L, M	34 minutes
12-4-18	Pair Work part 2	D, G	36 minutes
12-4-18	Debriefing at end of work for the day	All	6 minutes

Table 3.5 continued

12-5-18 <i>Day 10</i>	Pair Work part 3	L, M	24 minutes
12-5-18	Pair Work part 3	D, G	60 minutes
12-5-18	Pair Work part 4	L, M	33 minutes
12-5-18	Pair Work part 5	L, M	12 minutes
12-5-18	Debriefing after working on Lexicon	All	5 minutes
12-6-18 <i>Day 11</i>	Pair Work part 4	D, G	47 minutes
12-10-18 <i>Day 12</i>	Pair Work part 6	L, M, E	50 minutes
12-10-18	Pair Work part 5	D, G	52 minutes
12-11-18 <i>Day 13</i>	Class Critique of Books	All	13 minutes
12-11-18	Pair Work part 6	D, G	46 minutes
12-11-18	Pair Work part 7	L, M, E	45 minutes
12-12-18 <i>Day 14</i>	Pair Work part 8	L, M, E	51 minutes
12-13-18 <i>Day 15</i>	Pair Work part 9	L, M, E	25 minutes
12-13-18	Pair Work part 10	L, M, E	28 minutes

Table 3.6 below displays the various artifacts that were collected. There are also numerous artifacts that can be seen in Appendices C-F. Table 3.6 shows students' artifacts that were collected during this project. All student artifacts were kept in a locked cabinet located in my fifth-grade classroom.

Table 3.6: Data collection artifacts

Date	“activity”	Group/student	Artifact Name
10-5-18	Informal Pen Pal Letters	All	First Pen Pal Letter
11-1-18 <i>Day 2</i>	KWL	All	Dialect KWL
11-2-18	Family History-homework	All	Family History Questionnaire Names, Where Born and Languages of Parents, Grandparents and Great Grandparents.
11-27-18 <i>Day 4</i>	Registers and Dialects Cloze Activity	All	Registers and Dialects
11-28-18 <i>Day 5</i>	Formal Letter	All	Students wrote a Formal Letter to Fish Biologist for helping them with their Science Fair Projects.
11-30-18 <i>Day 7</i>	Aniak Lexicon	All	Aniak Lexicon
12-4-18 <i>Day 9</i>	Book Creator Digital Lexicons	All (6)	Aniak Digital Lexicon
12-14-18 <i>Day 16</i>	Aniak Lexicon Projects Submitted to Teacher	All (6)	Lexicon Book Projects

Throughout the data analysis process, data were collected and coded. Appendix B shows an example of my coding process. As stated previously I followed Charmaz’s (2014) constructivist grounded theory of coding. I initially listened to my recordings, transcribed them, and then I coded them line by line. Next, I organized my codes by identifying patterns and lastly, I theorized and sampled my codes. The following chapter will describe in more detail the patterns I found in the data, as a result of the coding process.

Chapter 4: Analysis

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study was to understand how a teacher can build a student's linguistic awareness. I wanted to find out what fifth grade students notice about linguistic variation in our village while building a digital lexicon. A major emphasis of this teacher action research (TAR) was lexicon. Lexicon is the term I use for vocabulary. The focus on lexicon had students learning about commonly used words in their village and how their meanings differ or sometimes do not even exist outside of Aniak. In doing so students would build an understanding of how dialects differ across the United States of America and when and where to use formal language and informal language. Students were led through activities and were instructed on dialect as part of this study. The cumulative project was for student to create their own Digital Lexicon based on a class created list of Village English (VE) words used in Aniak. In this data analysis, I will provide examples from two different categories that emerged during the data analysis process. In Chapters 2 and 3, the literature and theories pertaining and connecting to this research were addressed as well as the methodology behind the organization, structure, setting and participants involved. In this data analysis chapter, I will briefly address the specific questions of this research inquiry. I will then describe the instructional procedures, data collection process, the data analysis steps taken, research findings and then I will readdress those questions based on my findings.

Research Questions

My research questions are as follows:

1. What does Village English (VE) look like in Aniak?
2. What did I do to help my students learn about Aniak lexicon/VE?

3. What did my students learn about Aniak lexicon/VE?

Instructional Procedures

In Chapter 3, I briefly outlined my instructional plan for this research study. Throughout this study, students were directly instructed and led through activities. These instructional activities are listed and briefly described below in Table 4.1. The activities that are in bold font are the ones that will be analyzed in more detail throughout this chapter.

Table 4.1: List of activities and descriptions

Activity	Description
1. Informal letter to pen pals	Students wrote informal letters to their pen pals in Michigan.
2. Plot of story	Narrator with British dialect tells the story of <i>Little Red Riding Hood</i> video.
3. KWL	Students fill out the “What I Know” and “What I Want to Learn” sections of the KWL graphic organizer. At the end of the project student filled in the “What I Learned” section.
4. What is Dialect?	Short video explaining dialect.
5. Family History	Student fills out a family history tree with parents at home for homework.
6. Journeys ELA Anchor text of “Old Yeller”	Read Aloud of ELA curriculum text.
7. Dialogue and Dialect lesson	Teacher instruction using PowerPoint slides on dialect (see appendices C, D and E).
8. Smoky Mountain Dialect video	Short video with examples of Smoky Mountain dialect.
9. Language, Registers and Code Switching	Teacher instruction and role playing.
10. Registers and Dialects Cloze activity	Student cloze activity where they fill in the blanks.
11. Soda/Pop lesson and dialects across the US	Teacher instruction that began with a photo of carbonated soft drinks and students identified what they called them. Then a PowerPoint lesson of different terms across the United States (see Appendices F, G and H).
12. Partner Reading of “Old Yeller”	Students worked in partners to read aloud “Old Yeller”. Teacher emphasized students noticing the dialect that the characters use.
13. Formal and Informal review	Teacher instruction on Formal and Informal language and when it is appropriate to use each.

Table 4.1 continued

14. Formal letters to Biologist	Students wrote a formal thank you letter to retired fish biologist who helped students with their science fair projects.
15. SAE Review and introduction of VE term	Teacher instruction on Standard Academic English (SAE) and introduce the new term Village English (VE).
16. Aniak Lexicon and VE	Worksheet with images to get students thinking of words used in Aniak that describe those images. Then the teacher identifies which of those terms are considered SAE and VE.
17. Aniak Lexicon and Word List	Class generated lexicon for Aniak. We developed this as a class and came up with 14 terms to use for the Book Creator Digital Lexicon (see Appendix I).
18. Book Creator Digital Lexicons	Students worked in pairs, one group of three, to create their own Aniak Lexicon using the Book Creator App on their iPads (see Appendix J).
19. Pair Work Time on Digital Lexicons	Student work time on their Aniak Digital Lexicon Books.
20. Final SAE and VE Assessment	An assessment given after completion of the Aniak Lexicon Book. Students listed SAE terms and VE terms.

This research project spanned three months. I had not originally planned for the project to take that long but I realized that students did not have a firm grasp on what language was. I decided to take more time during the instructional activities to allow students to process their learning and to not get burned out on our topic. I believe that this was a crucial decision that truly helped students during the meaning making process. If students are presented with too much information, they have a difficult time processing that information. I found that it was important to give students time to process information before continuing on. This supported the learners as they worked through their individual meaning making process. I carefully spaced out my lessons and made sure students had time to process and time to be able to express what they learned.

Meeting the Meaning Makers

As stated previously this study took place in my fifth-grade classroom. The students involved in this study will be referred to as “meaning makers” as their process of meaning making led me to my discoveries as a teacher action researcher. Table 4.2 provides more details about the participants. The participants in this study were 13 fifth grade students at Auntie Mary Nicoli Elementary School. All 13 students are Alaskan Native and speak a variety of English known as Village English.

Table 4.2: Meaning making participants

Pseudonym	Gender	Ethnicity	Has Travelled outside Aniak?	Additional Information
Student A	Female	Alaska Native Father and Caucasian Mother	No	This student has travelled by means of the river to nearby villages.
Student B	Female	Alaska Native Mother and Father	No	This student has travelled by means of the river to nearby villages.
Student C	Male	Part Alaska Native and Part Caucasian Mother and Father	No	This student has travelled by means of the river to nearby villages.
Student D	Female	Part Alaska Native and Caucasian Mother and Caucasian Father	Yes	This student has travelled to Anchorage and has been outside of Alaska.
Student E	Female	Alaska Native Mother and Father	Yes	This student has travelled to Anchorage.
Student F	Male	Alaska Native Mother and Father	No	This student has travelled by means of the river to nearby villages.
Student G	Female	Alaska Native Mother and Father	Yes	This student has travelled to Anchorage.
Student H	Male	Alaska Native Mother and Father	Yes	This student has travelled to Anchorage.
Student I	Male	Alaska Native Mother and Father	No	This student has travelled by means of the river to nearby villages.
Student J	Male	Alaska Native Mother and Father	No	This student has travelled by means of the river to nearby villages.

Table 4.2 continued

Student K	Male	Part Alaska Native and Part Caucasian Mother and Father	Yes	This student has travelled to Anchorage.
Student L	Female	Alaska Native Mother and Father	Yes	This student has travelled to Anchorage.
Student M	Female	Part Alaska Native Part Caucasian Mother and Alaska Native Father	No	This student has travelled by means of the river to nearby villages.

In Table 4.2 you can see that most students have not travelled outside of Aniak. There are a few students that have been to Anchorage and one student who has been outside of Alaska. Students who have travelled the river to nearby villages use transportation means such as boats in the summer and snowmobiles in the winter.

Prior to having students sign the assent form I asked if they had any questions or needed clarification on anything. Once all consent forms were turned in, I was able to see how many participants I would have and plan for the span of time when I would conduct my research. I was able to begin in October 2018. I was unsure of the length in which the research would take so I allotted to have my research completed prior to the end of December 2018. I began slowly with students to make sure they were not overloaded with information. I knew that this would be a challenging concept and students needed the necessary time to process the information. I also wanted to make sure that students continued to enjoy the lessons so I did not want to push them too hard too quickly. Instead, I took a more gradual approach to finishing my data collection.

When conducting my research, I used a video camera and a voice recorder to record my instruction and activities. At the end of each day of recording I uploaded both video and audio recording onto my laptop and then wrote in my TAR journal to note what happened in the recordings. For this TAR I collected a total of sixteen days of instruction and activities. Once all

the data collection was completed, I began the processes of transcribing the nearly ten hours of recordings I had collected.

Analyzing Student Artifacts and Discussions

My data analysis process started by transcribing all the audio recordings. I tried to do this on a daily basis after a recording event but this was a struggle with my busy schedule. I was able to at least transcribe on a weekly basis. This allowed me to transcribe while the event was still fresh in my mind. I first listened to each recording and then re-listened and transcribed what I felt were key events that took place in the recordings. This was also difficult for me as I felt that nearly every event was important and may be key to my research. Because I had this difficulty differentiating what would be crucial or not, I decided to transcribe almost every event. The tedious task of transcribing almost ten hours of data took a good bit of time but left me feeling that I had not missed any key events. For an example of how I structured my transcriptions see Excerpt 1.

Excerpt 1: Transcription example

Little Red Riding Hood Introductory Activity to Dialects Day 1 10-30-18

T: do we use the word woodcutter here in Aniak

C: no

T: no, so right now we are going to focus on some words were there any words other words that you heard or you may have heard before but it's not something that we use, try and keep those heads up please, raise your hand please we're going to watch it again in a second but any other words

D: big eyes

T: big eyes now that's a description saying the wolf has big eyes ok, so not words but what was our setting, think about this where did the story take place

D: the woods

T: the woods yes and where what we said was it night time or day time

[day time]

T: day time so we know that in the woods during the day that's our setting

The transcription in Excerpt 1 was the first recording I transcribed. The “T” is used for the teacher and “C” and “D” are used for the Students. In this transcription, you can see how I listened to my recordings and then transcribed them word by word.

The next step in analyzing my data was to examine all my transcriptions and go through them line by line to complete my initial coding. In the initial coding process, I provided a gerund, verbs usually ending in -ing, to address what was happening in each line of my transcriptions (an example of this can be found in Table 4.3). Charmaz (2014) explains this process as “grounded theory coding requires us to stop and ask analytic questions of the data we have gathered. These questions not only further our understanding of the studied life but also help us direct subsequent data-gathering toward the analytic issues we are defining” (p. 109). This means that as I coded I took a deeper look into what the data were telling me. I needed to separate myself from the experience and see what story the data told. Charmaz (2014), believed this was an important step to take as a teacher action researcher. Teacher researchers must make sure that they are looking at the data with a critical eye and are being transparent about how their personal relations or feelings might influence their judgments.

Table 4.3: Coding example

Codes	Lines	Transcription
Explaining, teacher explains the expectations for sharing in their group	1-5	T: alright what you are going to do is go around in your table group and you are going to talk about right now I only want you talking about the k so right now we are all going to focus on what do you know or what or what do you think you know about dialect and please take turns talking I don't care who goes first you guys can decide you can go clockwise if you want but when someone else is talking what should you be doing?
Expanding on student's response to question	6-8	M: listening T: make sure you are listening actively listening to what they are saying and then we can switch to the next person ok go ahead and get started I will be walking around
Stating the students misunderstanding of what dialect means	9	M: this is not making sense to me right now ok go
Explaining dialect by using the example of the British audio we listened to in class	10	C: English she have British dialect of reading little red riding hood the book

The following sections will describe and explain the instructional activities and the students' responses. Evidence of the patterns in students' responses consists of a few student products that are most clear illustrations of each pattern.

Introducing Dialect and Understanding Students' Linguistic Knowledge Base

I began my research by using a KWL activity. The KWL activity is a graphic organizer that has students divide between the "K" which means "what do you know?," the "W" which means "what do you want to know?," and the "L" which means "what have you learned?" Prior to the K and W sections I felt that I needed to prepare my students with a bit of information about what dialect is.

Excerpt 2: Teacher Journal Entry November 1, 2018

Overall students were very confused about what dialect meant. They kept thinking it meant different languages, but I think they actually are unaware of what different languages mean. They were also confused when I told them there were other countries in the world besides the USA. I explained that we live in the United States of America and the people that are citizens of the USA are called Americans and that our primary language is English not “American”. I explained several times that Yup’ik is the people and Yugtun is the language of the Yup’ik people. This was also very confusing to them as this year is the first year that we have been having Yup’ik class and in that class students are learning the Yugtun Language. In Aniak Yup’ik has meant both the people and language. So I can understand why students are confused that there is a different word for the language. I think this is because of the disconnect and not many people knowing about their cultural background.

As noted in my journal entry I was surprised at the lack of knowledge about other languages. The word “dialect” was a new word to students so for them to be able to write a “K” know section I had to do some pre-teaching about this concept. I chose to explain what the word dialect meant, stressing that it did not mean different languages, rather it meant variations in one language and in our case, English. Prior to the KWL, students watched a video of the story of Little Red Riding Hood (LRRH) to learn about plot structure. I purposefully chose this video because the narrator was from Great Britain. During the video, I led the students on some discussions about the vocabulary the narrator used and how it differed from our own vocabulary. Students also noticed that the narrator sounded different. The narrator spoke with a British dialect and students were able to notice the differences in vocabulary used.

As seen in Excerpt 3 I identify that the narrator used the term “woodcutter” and ask students if that is a word used in Aniak. Student C replies “no”. I go on to explain how the narrator sounds a little different and I want students to think about the words we use in Aniak and how they can differ from words the students hear on television in movies and even in Anchorage. I do this to try and spark the students thinking about language used outside of Aniak

and how it can be similar and different. Mainly I want to begin the discussion with students about language varying depending on where you are.

Excerpt 3: Little Red Riding Hood introductory activity

**Little Red Riding Hood Introductory Activity to Dialects Day 1
10-30-18**

T: woodcutter, have you heard that word used before
[no]

T: do we use the word woodcutter here in Aniak

C: no

T: no, so right now we are going to focus on some words were there any words other words that you heard or you may have heard before but it's not something that we use, try and keep those heads up please, raise your hand please we're going to watch it again in a second but any other words

T: sound a little different, very good I'm gonna put that lived in a wood, good anything else right here, think about the words we use in Aniak and there's different sometimes you hear things differently on tv and in movies or maybe even in Anchorage or other places do you notice anything

M: granny

T: granny, they're using the word granny how many of you call your grandmother granny
[gram]

T: how many of you call your grandmother granny, anyone, what is the word you use for grandmother here

B: gram

T: gram right so you call your grandmother gram, very good, anything else right here, you're doing great...

After this short initial lesson about dialect I felt students were ready to complete their KWL's. Students used what they knew about languages and what meaning they had made about dialects to fill out the "K" section and the "W" Sections. The "L" section is what they learned about dialects and will be discussed in further detail later in this chapter. Excerpt 4 is a teacher journal entry I wrote following the KW section of the activity.

Excerpt 4: Teacher Journal Entry October 30, 2018

Tuesday, October 30, 2018

The narrator spoke with a British dialect in the Little Red Riding Hood video. Students noticed her sounding different and different words being used. Our lesson focus was on the plot of the story but I expanded it to include some noticing about language. I wanted to introduce some things to the students to see what they noticed prior to my direct instruction lessons. It was somewhat of a task and then I asked them explicitly about the different words, phrases and sounds they heard. One student recognized that it was a British person and said that it was an accent. I explained that technically it was not an accent but a dialect because the person speaking's primary language is English and accent refers to someone whose primary language is a different language and they speak a second language but some elements of their first language come through, making them sound a bit different.

In Excerpt 4, a student notices that the narrator has a British accent. I do my best to explain that the student is correct in a way but that technically the speaker has an accent that is part of a dialect.

I will now share some of the students KWL's that I found particularly interesting. All students completed this activity immediately after my initial dialect lesson. The majority of students were able to write something down for the "K" section but some wrote "I don't know anything". I allowed students to do this because I realized that we had had one short lesson on dialect and I explained that because this was a new concept to them it was fine to not know anything about it yet. I also wanted to make sure that students did not begin this study with anxiety on the topic. Out of 13 students I only had two students who chose to write that they did not know anything yet. I think this shows that doing the initial short dialect lesson helped students get a general idea of what dialect is.

I Know:	I Want To Learn:
A different voice but not a language. She has a dialect with her voice and how she speaks.	Is it a different voice how people talk? Do Ms. Boynton have a dialect? Do I have a dialect? Do Alaska have a Dialect of people? Does every body have a different dialect?

Figure 4.1: KWL activity Student E.

In Figure 4.1 Student E identifies in the “I Know” section that he knows that dialect is a “different voice but not a different language”. This shows that the student is understanding that dialect is an element of one language. He also notices that the narrator from our story had a “different voice” so he was noticing how she pronounced things differently, different from the student’s language, and that she used different words. This student was displaying language awareness by identifying that the narrator has “dialect with her voice and how she speaks”.

In the “I Want to Learn” section this student wanted to learn “Do Ms. Boynton have a dialect” which shows that he was noticing, similarly to the narrator of LRRH, that I have a different voice. He also asks “Does everybody have a different dialect?” which shows that he is

thinking beyond Ms. Boynton and the narrator and possibly thinking about other people he has heard that sound different, such as in movies and television. This again, shows the students pre-existing awareness of language variations.

I Know:	I Want To Learn:
<p>That Dialect is not language.</p> <hr/> <p>it Doesnt not make sense to me.</p>	<p>What is Dialect?</p> <p>is there Different Dialect in the world?</p> <p>Does Ms Boynton speak Different,</p>

Figure 4.2: KWL activity Student D.

In Figure 4.2 Student D identifies in the “I Know” section that he understands that dialect is not language. By this the student means that the word dialect is not referring to comparing different languages, that dialect exists within a language. This was part of my brief instruction that I gave to students prior to filling out the KWL. Student D also states that it does not make sense to him. This shows that the student has some grasp on what the word dialect means but has not yet made meaning with the term dialect.

In the “W” section the student is asking what dialect is and if there are different dialects in the world. This shows that this student is trying to negotiate for meaning on what dialect even means. So far, this student has not yet been given enough information for learning to take place.

I Know:	I Want To Learn:
<p>Different language, Spanish, yupik, English</p> <p>I know Dialect isn't language</p>	<p>British, More yupik, More about mr. Boynton, Japanese, ??? is</p> <p>What is Dialect</p>

Figure 4.3: KWL activity Student B.

In Figure 4.3 Student B in section “I Know” lists some languages they know of and then explains that dialect is not language.

In the “I Want to Learn” section student B wants to learn about some different languages and the British dialect and they state that they want to learn “what is dialect?” This shows that the student has a good grasp on what different languages are but is confused by the concept of dialect.

I Know:	I Want To Learn: <small>known to this</small>
<p>there is other Different Dialects in each State</p>	<p>□ Why dont talk the Same</p> <p>□ Some people talk in different Dialects In Different States □ or villages</p>

Figure 4.4: KWL activity Student L.

In Figure 4.4 Student L in section “I Know” explains that there are different dialects in each state. It is interesting that this student identified dialects as a state norm rather than as a community or village. In Alaska, we have many different villages, all of which have their own dialect.

In the “I Want to Learn” section the student wants to learn about why people do not talk the same and why people in different states and villages talk in different dialects. In this column that student refers to villages talking differently so this differs slightly from their response in the “I Know” section. Overall, these students raised great initial questions to our project.

In Table 4.4 I have taken all of the student responses for the “I Know” and the “What I Want to Know” sections and compiled them. Here you can see trends in students’ responses.

Any responses that were given more than once are identified with an “x2” or “x3” depending on how many times the response was given.

Table 4.4: Class KWL Summary

What I know	What I want to know
I think people that are in different places talk dialect.	Why do people don't talk the same?
Yup'ik, English	More about dialect (x3)
A different voice but not a language. She has a dialect with her voice and how she speaks.	Is it a different voice how people talk?
There is different people that speak dialects.	Does Ms. Boynton have a dialect? (x4)
There are different dialects in each state.	Does Alaska have a dialect of people?
I don't know anything about dialect (x3)	Does everybody have a different dialect?
She has a British dialect of reading <i>Little Red Riding Hood</i> .	Do my family have a different dialect?
That dialect is not language (x2).	Why don't people talk the same?
What accent is.	Do some people talk in different dialects in different states or villages?
What language is.	Do I have dialect?
That people speak different.	Could Ms. Boynton teach me the Spanish dialect of talking?
	What is dialect? (x2)
	Is there different dialect in the world?

In Table 4.4 you can see the accumulation of all the students' responses to the KW portion of the KWL activity. In the “What I Want to Know” column you can see that students are trying to make sense of what dialect is based from what they know about language. One student listed “Yup'ik, English” identifying the two different languages they knew about. Three students identified that they did not know what dialect was and two students stated that they knew that

dialect is not the same as language. A few students identified that dialect has to do with people from different places. This is showing an initial awareness that language variation occurs across the country. This was something that I was very curious if students were noticing or not. From this activity, I felt that students had been unconsciously noticing how people speak differently but no one had discussed it with them. I could tell that students were eager to know more.

In the “I Want to Know” section the most asked question was “Does Ms. Boynton have a dialect?” This tells me that students are either noticing that I speak differently from them, possibly due to my Midwestern upbringing, or it could be that I tend to use more Standard Academic language during my instruction. Either way it was very interesting that my students were asking this question.

What I learned from the KWL and what I did next.

The KWL activity was an important activity for me to gain insight into what the students’ previous conceptions were about language and specifically dialect. I immediately noticed that students were slightly confused by what different languages were. Students in Aniak speak English as their primary language. Only a few elders speak the native language of the Yup’ik people, known as Yugtun. Students just started learning about Yugtun, as a teacher at my school began teaching a Yup’ik studies class to students K-fifth.

As I began instructing my students on dialect, I quickly noticed that the students were struggling a bit with understanding what different languages were. I knew I needed students to have a clear understanding of languages as to not have them mixed up thinking that dialect meant different languages. Once I felt I had covered different languages with students I moved on to my dialect instruction. Figures 4.5 and 4.6 show the first two slides of my presentation on dialect.

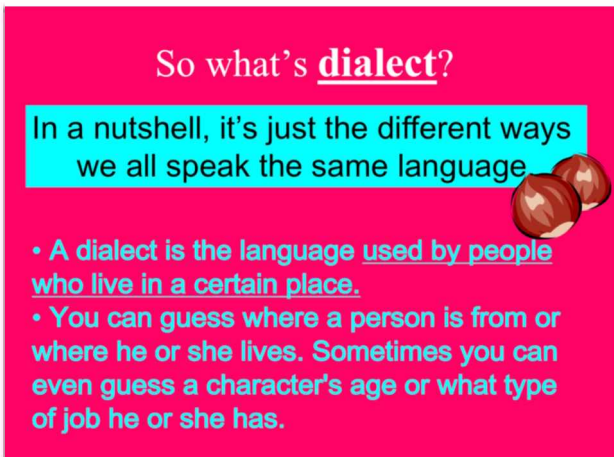


Figure 4.5: Slide introducing dialect to students.

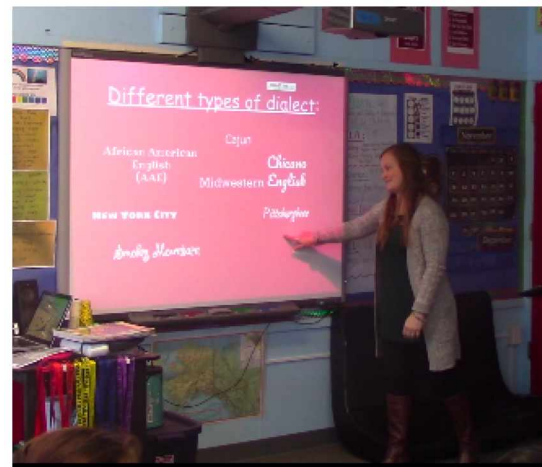


Figure 4.6: Teaching students about other dialects across the USA.

Right away I condensed the meaning of dialect into a ‘nutshell’. This was to help the students retain and recall the information. Next, we looked at some of the different types of dialects that are present in the United States. I briefly introduced the other dialects and then showed a video of the Smoky Mountain dialect. They students thought the video was really funny because of how different the people in the video spoke compared to the students.

In Figure 4.7 I used an excerpt from the novel *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain (1885). We discussed as a class the terms highlighted in yellow as they were some specific examples of dialect.

<p>Read this excerpt from <u>The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn</u> by Mark Twain.</p> <p>"GIT up! What you 'bout? What you doin' with this gun?" I judged he didn't know nothing about what he had been doing, so I says: "Somebody tried to get in, so I was laying for him." "Why didn't you roust me out?" "Well, I tried to, but I couldn't; I couldn't budge you." "Well, all right. Don't stand there palavering all day, but out with you and see if there's a fish on the lines for breakfast. I'll be along in a minute." He unlocked the door, and I cleared out up the river-bank. I noticed some pieces of limbs and such things floating down, and a sprinkling of bark; so I knowed the river had begun to rise. I reckoned I would have great times now if I was over at the town.</p>	<p>What did you notice about the yellow highlighted words in the passage?</p> <p>Some wrong <u>verb tenses</u>. (I knowed.)</p> <p>Some different <u>words</u>, like "palevering" and "reckoned."</p> <p>Some different <u>expressions</u>, like "roust me out" and "laying for him."</p>
---	--

Figure 4.7: Slide using an excerpt from Huckleberry Finn.

Figure 4.8: Slide highlighting dialectal words from Huckleberry Finn excerpt.

After we discussed the words in Figure 4.8, we identified that dialect had three important differences:

1. It can have different pronunciations (I asked the students to pronounce the word "think" and "thanks" and listen to the differences in pronunciation).
2. It can have different vocabulary (reckon, palavering, muskmelon).
3. It can use different grammatical structures (I knowed... We was... Me and him...).

After this activity, I believed that students had a stronger grasp on dialectal differences.

Now, I felt it was time to discuss what the term Standard Academic English (SAE) meant. I knew this term would be new as well so I wanted to present it in a way that both made sense to students and did not marginalize their own way of speaking. Figure 4.9 shows the slide I used to introduce SAE to students.



Figure 4.9: Slide introducing Standard Academic English to students.

I discussed with students that with all the different dialects it makes it very hard to create Math books, ELA books and so on that have all those different dialects. So instead, they have decided on one way of speaking to use in school settings and in all of our textbooks and that this is called SAE.

How my students understood dialectal variations across the United States.

The next topic I wanted address further with students was how dialects differed across the USA. I began this lesson by displaying an image of different soft drinks (see Figure 4.10). I provided students with a sticky note and asked them to write down what they call the items in this image. Next, I asked students to stand up with their sticky notes and I directed students who wrote down “soda” to move to the right corner of the classroom and those that wrote “pop” to move to the left corner of the classroom. The majority of students had put “pop” on their sticky note.



Figure 4.10: Image of carbonated drinks

In Excerpt 5, I am discussing the terms “soda” and “pop” with students. To my surprise several students wrote down “soda pop”. I asked the students if they said “soda pop” and in line 45 Student D replied that they sometimes say “soda” and sometimes say “pop,” while other students said that they have heard both terms and that is why they wrote down both. In lines 48-57 I tell students about my own background growing up in Michigan and the term I used. I also discuss having a cousin from the south who called all carbonated drinks “coke” and how I thought this was really strange. I chose to share personal information with my students because I wanted them to see how I was connecting and making meaning with the different terms we were discussing.

Excerpt 5: Soda vs Pop Dialects Across the USA

Soda vs Pop and Dialects Across USA

11-29-18

21:52 minutes

43 T: so the majority of you say pop and some say soda now some of you wrote pop slash soda
44 now why did you write that can somebody explain that

45 D: because I always think that I sometimes say soda or pop

46 T: and have you ever heard the word soda pop

47 [yea]

48 T: some people call this soda pop so they call it the two words together some people call
this 49 pop I grew up in Michigan with the Midwestern dialect I call this pop some people in
other 50 places call this soda some people call all of these coke, get me a coke even if they
want a 51 sprite they call them all coke and I remember growing up thinking that was so
weird because I 52 have a cousin who is my age who is from South Carolina and whenever we
would get 53 together for Christmas and I found out that she called pepsi and sprite she
called those coke I 54 thought she was crazy I said what are you talking about coke is coca
cola coke is a coke those 55 are pops and she had never heard the word pop she thought I was
crazy for calling all these 56 pop she was like what do you mean pop that's not pop, so isn't
that weird so did you know 57 that there are other names for these?

58 [no]

59 T: so the words we use for things is called you lexicon which is basically your vocabulary, I
60 think we mainly all say pop, if someone were to ask you to go get them a pop would you
61 understand what they mean?

62 [yes]

63 T: if someone asked you to get them a soda would you know what they mean

64 [yes]

After the Soda vs. Pop introductory activity, I put figure 4.11 up on the board and discussed the variety of terms used for carbonated drinks across the USA. This map helps students to visually see how dialect varies from region to region. Next, we looked at slides of what people call the end piece of bread, shopping carts, and hoagies (see Appendices H, I and J). This helped students understand how language varies across the United States. Many of the terms in the slides were brand new to the students. The student had a lot of fun with this activity as they were excited to give their responses to the prompts and surprised by the results. Figure 4.11 shows how the term for a carbonated beverage differs across the United States, but unfortunately these maps do not yet include Alaska or Hawaii.

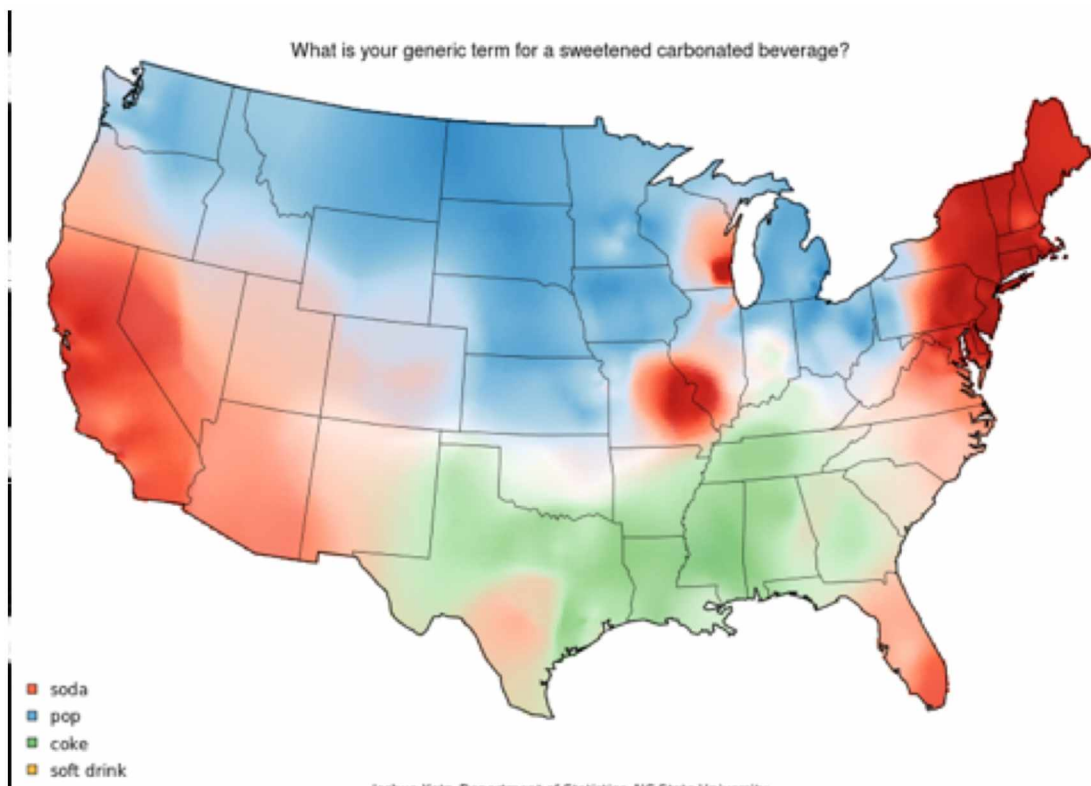


Figure 4.11: Map of the dialectal terms for a carbonated beverage across the USA (Abadi, 2018).

Students were surprised at all the different terms for a carbonated beverage. As a class, they came up with the terms “pop” and “soda”. This activity helped open students’ eyes to how language is used outside of Aniak, Alaska.

How Students made sense of formal and informal language.

The next topic to address with my students was formal and informal language. Now that students had a good idea on what dialect means and the difference between Village English (VE) and Standard Academic English (SAE), I wanted student to be able to understand when and why to use formal language and informal language. I began by displaying Figure 4.12 on the board and discussed with students what the images were showing here.



Figure 4.12: Slides Introducing Informal vs Formal dialect to students.

Using Figure 4.12 I discussed with my students the types of clothing the people in the images were wearing. We talked about when and where you would wear these different types of clothing. This was a great way to introduce the topic of code-switching (here referred to as switching between dialects rather than languages) with students so that they had a concrete image they could think of. I wanted students to understand how people adjust the language they use based on who they are speaking to. Students could understand the images presented in Figure 4.12 as how you dress differently for different occasions. I used this analogy to help them understand how people do the same kind of thing with language. We refer to adjusting our language, much like adjusting our outfits, as code-switching.

In Figure 4.13 and Figure 4.14 I began putting students into scenarios that had them deciding if they would use informal or formal dialect.

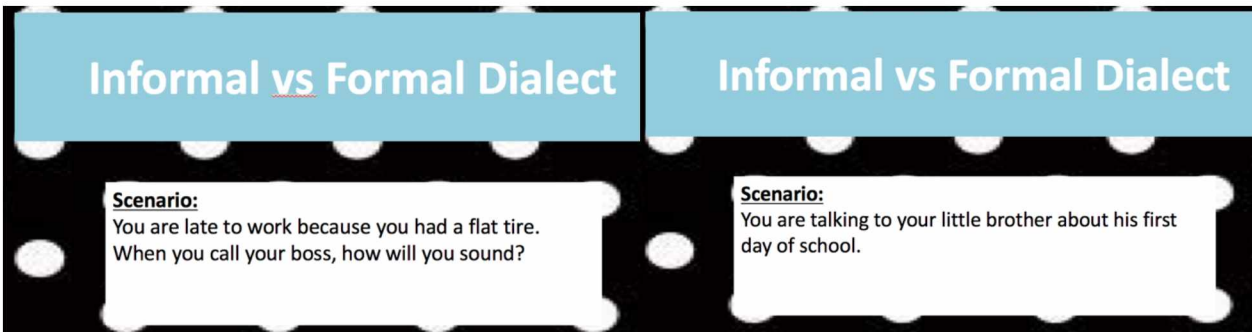


Figure 4.13: Informal vs Formal dialect scenario 1.

Figure 4.14: Informal vs Formal dialect scenario 2.

In Figure 4.13 students were put in the scenario of being late for work and they needed to contact their boss– would they use formal or informal language while speaking to their boss? Students did a great job all saying they would use formal language because that is your boss and you want to speak formally to them. In Figure 4.14 students were put in the scenario of talking to a younger brother about their first day of school, and whether they would you use formal or informal language while talking to a younger brother. The students again answered unanimously with the correct response of informal. This activity showed me that students were understanding the differences between formal and informal language and when and where to use them.

In Figure 4.15 shows a student example of our Formal vs Informal language cloze activity. This activity came at the end of our formal and informal language instruction. We filled this out as a class with students being called on to give responses.

LS.3.B COMPARE AND CONTRAST VARIETIES OF ENGLISH

Registers and Dialects

Register is the way that someone uses their language, whether formally or informally. Register is determined by considering your audience.

Formal	Informal
Mainly used when writing letters, essays, or reports, or when speaking to someone in a <u>proper</u> setting. Complex vocabulary and complete sentences are used.	Mainly used when writing emails, notes, or letters to friends, or when speaking to <u>friends</u> or <u>family</u> . Everyday vocabulary is used including slang or expressions.

Dialect is a form of language that is specific to a particular place. The pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, and expressions change depending on where someone live. Writers can include dialects to make their readers feel like they are in the story described.

Southern Dialect examples: Fixin', Y'all, Aint
English Dialect examples: Dodgy, Wicked, Gobsnacked
Australian Dialect examples: Mate, Aussie, G'Day

Practice: Choose whether you should use formal or informal language.

- You have to give a speech to your class for a grade- Formal
- You are texting your friend to see if they want to go to the mall- informal
- You are writing a letter to a business to request an improvement to a product- formal
- You are answering an interview question to get a new job- formal
- You are at dinner and having a casual conversation with a friend- informal

Read the following sentences and circle whether it is informal or formal.

- "Dear Class of 2027- As we graduate today and move on to the next stage of our lives we need to remember that we are prepared to go out and be good citizens and achieve something great!"
Formal or Informal
- "Angie! OMG! Can you believe that movie! It was so funny! LOL!" --Sue Formal or Informal

Practice: Read the sentence. Consider the word choice and determine the dialect. Circle the origin.

- My mates wanted hot dogs so we started up the barbie.
English (England) Southern Australian
- I was gobsnacked when I saw the wicked decorations at my party.
English (England) Southern Australian
- Are y'all fixin' to go to the library after school? English (England) Southern Australian

Created by: The History Owl

Figure 4.15: Registers and dialects cloze activity.

Overall, the students showed an increased understanding of language variations and their meaning of dialect expanded. I assisted students through the cloze activity but students generated the responses. I was very pleased with the growth that was already taking place this quickly into my dialect instruction. The students were not afraid to challenge themselves and were now seeing the available designs and were in the process of designing to create meaning.

Informal and Formal Letters

The next activity I am going to discuss was an activity that involved students writing an informal letter to their pen pal in Michigan and then writing a formal letter to the retired fish biologist who came to our classroom to run a simulation of the Math & Science Expedition and help the students with their science fair projects. The informal letter was completed first near the beginning of the school year. Students began these letters by introducing themselves and telling their pen pal about their hobbies. The formal letter was written after students were instructed about the differences between formal and informal language and learned about Standard Academic English (SAE). In these short letters, students are thanking the biologist for coming to Aniak to work with them and helping them learn about salmon in our rivers.

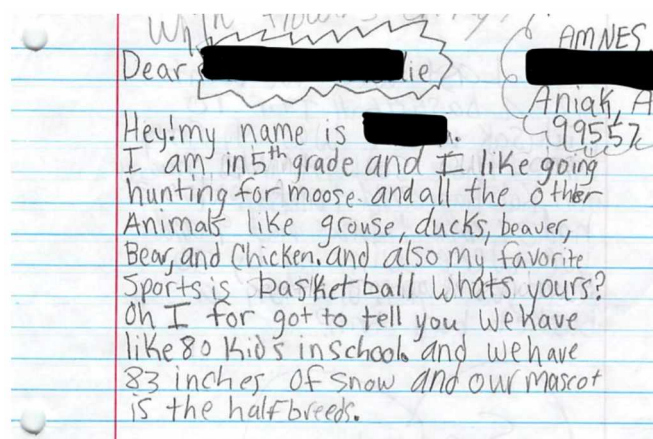


Figure 4.16: Student L informal letter.

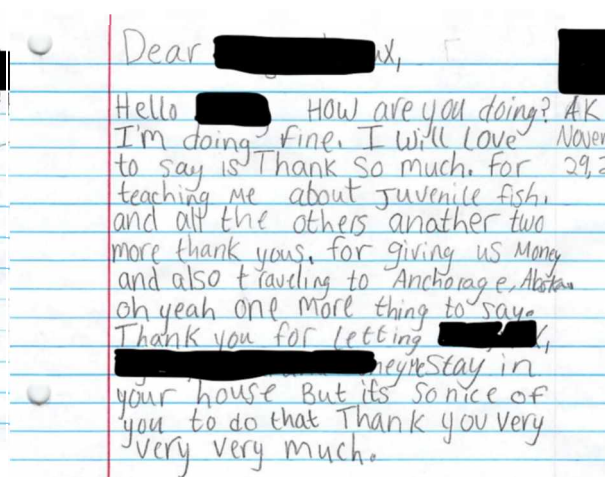


Figure 4.17: Student L formal letter.

In Figure 4.16 Student L has written an informal letter to their pen pal. The student has chosen to begin the letter with “Hey!” this is an informal way to begin a letter. They also use words like “oh” and “like” which are examples of informal language. In Figure 4.17 this same student has written a formal letter. The student begins this letter with “Hello.” This shows how

the student recognized that “hello” was a more formal way to start a letter. In the letter, the student also asks “How are you doing?” displaying the student formal approach to interacting with the letter recipient.

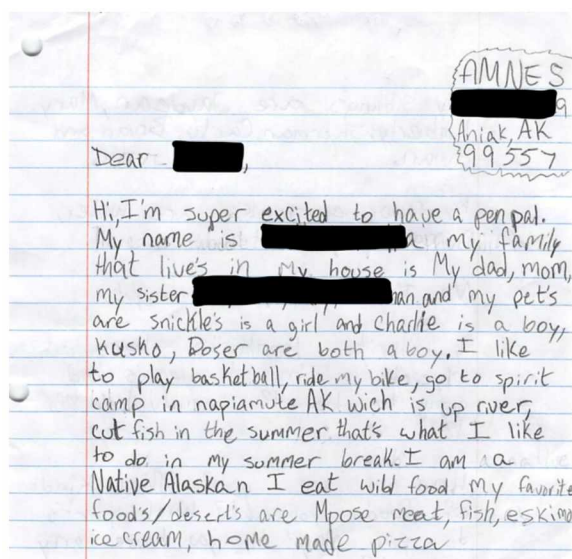


Figure 4.18: Student B informal letter.

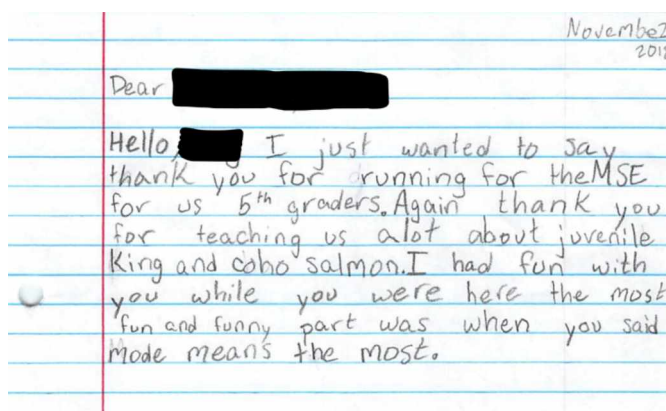


Figure 4.19: Student B formal letter.

In Figure 4.18 Student B has written an informal pen pal letter. You can see that the student chose to begin this letter with “Hi”. This is an informal salutation and acceptable in a letter to a friend. In Figure 4.19 Student B has written a formal letter and has chosen to begin this letter with “Hello”. This is a more formal salutation that is more appropriate for a formal letter. This is an example of how Student B was understanding the differences of formal and informal language.

Dear [redacted] AMNES
 Hi my name is [redacted] Aniak, AK 99557
 Here's some stuff about me. I love writing and reading. I love the Baby Sisters club. I had a two puppies, two parakey, one cat, a baby rabbit. My favorite is ball, my favorite food is donuts with chocolate milk, my favorite animal is a owl, fox, and a wolf. I like swimming in the summer and sledding in the winter. I'm going to be 11 in July. I have 4 sisters and 2 brothers. There are 500 people in Aniak. We get 83 inches of snow a year. In winter it gets as cold as -40 degrees. We have 80 students Pre-K-5th grade. Our High School is the Halfbreeds. My favorite team is the cow boys.

Figure 4.20: Student A informal letter.

[redacted]
 Aniak, AK 99557
 November 29, 201
 Dear [redacted]
 Hello I am [redacted] I would like to thank you for helping [redacted] and me. I learned that there were 5 different Speices.

Figure 4.21: Student A formal letter.

In Figure 4.20 Student A also chose to begin their letter with “Hi,” which is informal and acceptable in a letter to a friend. In Figure 4.21 Student A chose to begin their letter with “Hello”. This is a more formal greeting and is acceptable in a formal letter.

These letters showed that students were beginning to grasp some of the concepts of formal and informal language. They understood that difference between salutations. Although there was still evidence of informal language coming through in the formal letters, I think this showed a step in the right direction for students as they were in the process of beginning to understand this new concept of formal and informal language.

Introducing Students to the Term Village English

One of the most interesting occurrences during this study was when I was introducing the students to the term used for their own dialect. First of all, even though we had discussed dialect and how people all over the United States have different dialects, it still came as a surprise to

students that they had a dialect and especially that their dialect had a name. Excerpt 6 was written following my instruction on the students' dialect.

Excerpt 6: Teacher Journal Entry November 29, 2018

I introduced the term Village English (VE) and explained what it means. Then I talked about lexicon and how Aniak has its own lexicon. Students were shocked to learn that their dialect was called Village English. They had never heard that term before. I think this shows that students were completely unaware that language variation was a real thing that has been identified and studied by linguists. They seem to have noticed that words were used differently for things, only slightly. As I referenced my Midwestern Dialect and the things that were a surprise to me when I first came to Aniak seven years ago they seemed genuinely surprised that people didn't use those terms elsewhere. This is an interesting group of students because all of them were born and raised in Aniak and most of them have never travelled outside of Alaska and many have never left Aniak.

In Figures 4.22 and 4.23 students were asked to look at the images and write down the first word that came to their mind to describe the image. This activity was done with the whole class. After students independently wrote down their words we came together as a class to identify if they were Village English terms. Students used a highlighter and were asked to circle or highlight the term if it was VE, as compared to SAE. I helped my students with this as I learned that students struggled to differentiate between VE and SAE.

Aniak Lexicon

Name: [REDACTED] Date: 11-29-18

VE




Image	Describe this image
	person jumping in the water Dukem
	four-wheeler Bike
	basketball team

Figure 4.22: Identifying VE in Aniak page 1.

In Figure 4.22 the student identifies some terms for the images. During instruction, the students circled the term with their highlighter to show that it was a Village English term. The first images the student identified as “dukem.” This term is commonly used to refer to getting wet. The second picture the students identified as a “bike;” in Aniak people call four-wheelers bikes. In the last image the student uses the term “basketball team” which is an SAE term.

	<u>Snowmachie</u>
	boat
	<u>Pulling</u>

Figure 4.23: Identifying VE in Aniak page 2.

In Figure 4.23 the student identifies the first image as a “snowmachine”. In Aniak and most of Alaska a snowmobile is commonly referred to as a snowmachine. The second image the student identifies as a boat. You can see that this term was not circled indicating that it is an SAE term. The last image the student identifies as “pulling”. This term is circled because in Aniak “pulling” refers to a sled being attached to a four-wheeler, dog team or snowmachine and being pulled around during the winter.

This activity served as preparation for our Aniak Digital Lexicon Book project. In the next section I will go into detail on what occurred during the Aniak Digital Lexicon Book project.

Aniak Digital Lexicon Book

The final activity in my research was the Aniak Digital Lexicon Book. This project had students working in pairs to create a digital lexicon using a class generated list of Village English terms. Students were asked to define each VE term in their own words, use it in a sentence and draw or find an image to represent this term. Next, they had to write down the definition of the term in SAE, use it in a sentence and draw or find an image to represent this term. Then the students recorded themselves reading each page. Students then used their iPads and an application called *Book Creator* to create their Aniak Digital Lexicon Book.

I decided to put students in pairs based on their dialectal knowledge and background. I wanted to make sure that one person in the pair was stronger in VE and the other was stronger in SAE. I used my initial KWL assessment and knowledge of the students' language to create pairs. This way each pair would be able to collaborate about each term while bringing different kinds of expertise to the table.

The Aniak Lexicon Book project involved students creating a digital lexicon of our class generated list. As a class, we developed a list of 15 Village English terms that we would use for the Digital Lexicon project. Table 4.5 lists the terms and their definitions according to Village English.

Table 4.5: Village English Terms and Definitions

<u>Village English Terms</u>	<u>Village English Definitions</u>
Bum	In reference to a person or an object not being of much worth.
Gram	A person's mother's mom or father's mom.
Dukem	To get your feet or body wet accidentally.
Snowmachine	Vehicle used to travel around on the snow.
Fish Camp	A family cabin along the river where collecting and preserving fish takes place.
Pedal Bike	A two-wheeled bike you ride on.
Pulling	When a vehicle pulls a sled behind it.
Camping	Staying overnight at a friend's house.
Bike	A four-wheeler.
Uppa	A grandfather.
Half Off	When a person is of little value or no good.
Auntie	An aunt.
Junk	When something or someone is bad.
Breakup	When the river ice breaks and water flows.
Short Pants	A pair of shorts.

Figure 4.24 shows the Aniak Lexicon Book Project instructions. Students were given this page and I went over the items and my expectations for the project. Students then began working on this project.

ANIAK, ALASKA

LEXICON PROJECT

Ms. Boynton's 5th Grade Class 2018

With your partner use our class generated list and follow the below steps using the BookCreator App

1. Open BookCreator and choose "new project" in the top left corner
2. You will not be creating a title page as your pages will combined with other students to create one book.
3. For each word you will need to do the following:
 - A. *write down the word.*
 - B. *give the words definition of how the word is used in Aniak, Alaska (VE).*
 - C. *give the words definition according to the Webster Dictionary (SAE).*
 - D. *Draw or find an image of the meaning of the word in SAE and in VE (2 pictures).*
 - E. *Record audio of Steps 1-5.*

Repeat for Each Word :)

Figure 4.24: Aniak Digital Lexicon project student directions.

As students began the project there were some key difficulties that arose. One of these difficulties was finding the term in the dictionary. Students began realizing that they could not find the same terms in the dictionary and they needed to come up with a synonym for that term to use for the SAE side. Another difficulty was when students found their term in the dictionary but it meant something completely different than their VE definition. These were some of the "aha" moments that began to take place during the Aniak Digital Lexicon Project.

In Excerpt 7, I noticed that different pairs of students were coming up with different definitions for the VE terms. I thought this was really interesting because it seemed that how I have heard the terms used they mean one thing but it sounds like to different students they mean slightly different things. For example, for the word “dukem” some pairs were saying it meant to get your feet wet. Other pairs were saying it meant to get your whole body wet. Although they both mean something about getting wet, their definitions differed in the extent of the wetness.

Excerpt 7: Teacher Journal Entry December 4, 2018

I am hearing pairs coming up with different definitions of the VE words. Not able to find some words in the dictionary so using a synonym so students can write a definition. Students are very surprised to see a picture of an actual snowmachine (machine that makes snow).

“Yea, we don’t call it that that’s a snowmachine for us” (points to a picture of a snogo). “That is so weird” Student D

In Excerpt 8, I noticed that students were struggling to find the SAE equivalent for short pants. In Aniak shorts are referred to as “short pants” not “shorts”. I found it interesting that the students had a difficult time coming up with this term because I figured they had heard it on television or in movies before. The quote from Student C shows how the student noticed that one of our classroom novels uses the word “bicycle” rather than “pedal bike” the VE term commonly used in Aniak.

Excerpt 8: Teacher Journal Entry December 5, 2018

Students are struggling with SAE word for “short pants” and SAE word for “gram”. Focusing on equivalent words in SAE not direct definitions because most words aren’t in SAE but some are...hmm.

“Ms. Boynton, you know that book *Hero on a Bicycle* they call it bicycle not pedal bike” – Student C

In Excerpt 9, students were wanting to use the Yup'ik word, “anun” for aunt. I told them to use “auntie” instead. I did this because “anun” is from a different language and “auntie” is the VE term used in Aniak. Also in Excerpt 9, Student K was struggling with what picture to draw for the SAE equivalent. He was having a hard time understanding that “bum” meant something different in SAE as he was wanting to draw an image that matched his idea of the definition of “bum”. This was something that I noticed happening with several pairs of students. It was difficult for them to change their understanding of some words. This makes sense because they have always known one definition of a word and they are just learning that words can have multiple meanings.

Excerpt 9: Teacher Journal Entry December 6, 2018

Student L and Student M want to use “anun” for aunt in VE, I told them that was good but to also use “Auntie” because a lot of people in Aniak use “Auntie”.

Student K was struggling with word “bum”. He wanted to draw a bad kid for SAE, I explained that is what it means in VE but in SAE a “bum” is someone who doesn't work like a homeless person.

Gram- some students were putting SAE Grandmother and writing the definitions and some were writing Gram for SAE and using a metric unit of mass or weight for the definition.

In Excerpt 10, I am excited about how students are learning about language. I am especially glad that I had students read their pages aloud and record them. Many pairs are doing several attempts to read their pages clearly. I think this is helping students in their meaning making process. By hearing themselves explain the words and their meanings they are gaining a deeper understanding into how they are internalizing the concept of SAE and VE similarities and differences. Students are negotiating for meaning as they put their thoughts and ideas into words. They are also challenging their assumptions about language. As students are making meaning in the design process, they are receiving new information, dialect instruction, in the form of

available designs. Students are taking this new information and are creating new meaning through the designing phase of the design cycle. Lastly, students form a new meaning known as the redesigned. At the end of Excerpt 10 I inserted a quote from a Student J “Ms. Boynton this is starting to make sense,” which she said while recording the audio for her Aniak Lexicon Book.

Excerpt 10: Teacher Journal Entry December 7, 2018

Students continue working on Aniak Digital Lexicon Books. It is great how much students are saying things out loud, such as SAE, and the definitions. I think that this will really help them retain the information gaining a deeper understanding. They have to do this because part of the assignment is to voice record themselves reading the text on each page and describing the photos they chose. I think it was a good decision to include that into their books.

“Ms. Boynton this is starting to make sense” Student J

During this project, students began to struggle with defining the VE term. Students wanted to use the word in a sentence for their definition. I have seen this as a common error each year when I ask students for definitions. Once they had their definitions, they then wrote their sentences and added their image, with most students choosing to use an image from the internet.

Excerpt 11 shows an interaction I had with a student about misusing a sentence for a definition.

Excerpt 11: Teacher Journal December 10, 2018

“What do we search for half off” -Student I “what does half off mean” -Ms. B “that person is half off” -Student I “that’s using it in a sentence but what does the word mean, are you saying that person is good” -Ms. B “no, they are bad I’ll search up bad” -Student I.

At the beginning of each pair’s digital book, students were asked to tell the reader about SAE and VE. Figure 4.25 is an example of some student pages from the beginning of their Aniak Digital Lexicon Book. The students wrote the abbreviations for the terms at the top of the page and then wrote out the full term. Next, they defined each term and lastly, they wrote at the bottom of the page if this was considered formal language or informal language. I thought the

students did a great job with this page and it made it clear to the reader what the terms SAE and VE were. All students began their book explaining the terms Standard Academic English (SAE) and Village English (VE). We did this step as a group because I wanted the students to be able to refer to this page if they were beginning to forget the definitions as they worked on their Aniak Digital Lexicon Books.



Figure 4.25: Beginning of Students I and F Aniak Digital Lexicon Book.

In Figures 4.26-4.31 a pair of students are working on their Aniak Digital Lexicon Book. The students are using an iPad and a small dry erase board. This pair of students has chosen to write down the SAE and VE words and definitions on the whiteboard, as seen in Figures 4.26 and 4.27. They have also chosen to draw their image for the terms on the whiteboard as seen in Figure 4.28 where the students are drawing an image for the VE term “fish camp”. The students

used the whiteboard to write and draw and then they took a picture of the whiteboard on their iPad and inserted the image into their Aniak Lexicon Book.

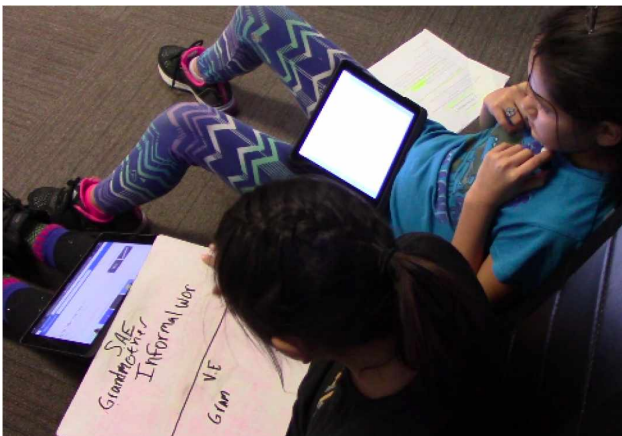


Figure 4.26: Students L and M working on Aniak Lexicon pages for gram.

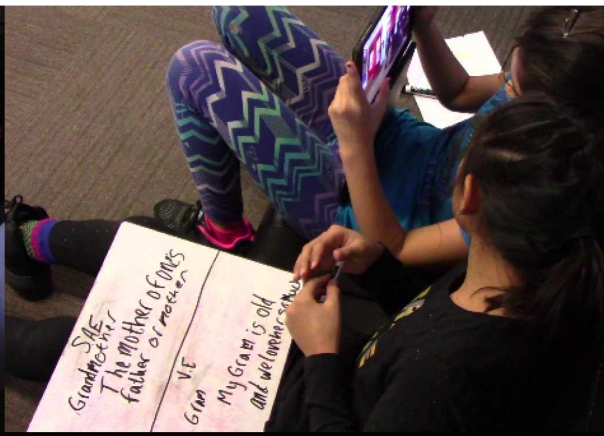


Figure 4.27: Students L and M working on Aniak Lexicon pages for gram.

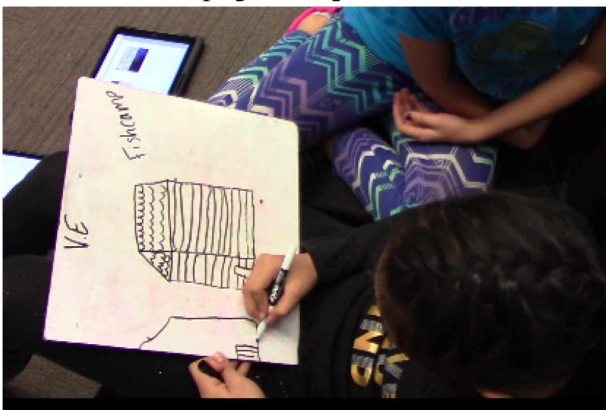


Figure 4.28: Students L and M working on Aniak Lexicon pages for fish camp.

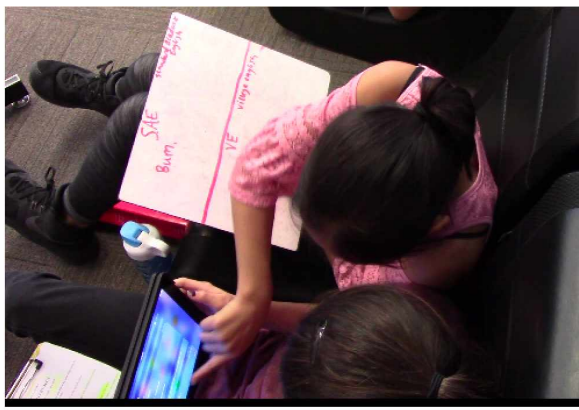


Figure 4.29: Students L and M working on Aniak Lexicon pages for bum.

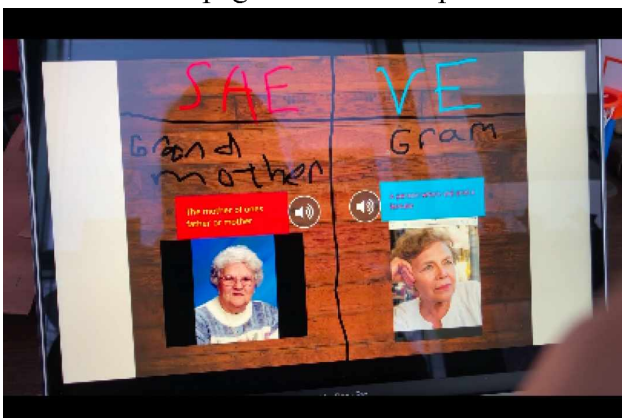


Figure 4.30: Students iPad book pages of gram.



Figure 4.31: Student iPad book pages of snowmachine.

In Figure 4.29 you can see a different pair of students working on their lexicon pages for “bum”. These students have also chosen to work on a whiteboard. In Figures 4.30 and 4.31 you can see examples of student pages that were created on the iPads. On these pages, students used the marker tool to write and then they found images on the internet. The small microphone icon you see in Figure 4.30 is where the students inserted their audio clips.

Figures 4.32-4.37 are images of Student’s A’s and B’s book pages. This pair of students mostly used their iPad and the tools on it to create their pages. You can see that they used a whiteboard to draw some of the images such as the VE image for “dukem” in Figure 4.32. I appreciated how in Figure 4.34 the students used an image of a four-wheeler and then drew in two people using a rope to explain the VE word “pulling”. I thought this was very creative and was an excellent way to show something that they were unable to find an image for on the internet. This was also an important learning moment as students realized that pulling is not a common practice outside of Aniak.

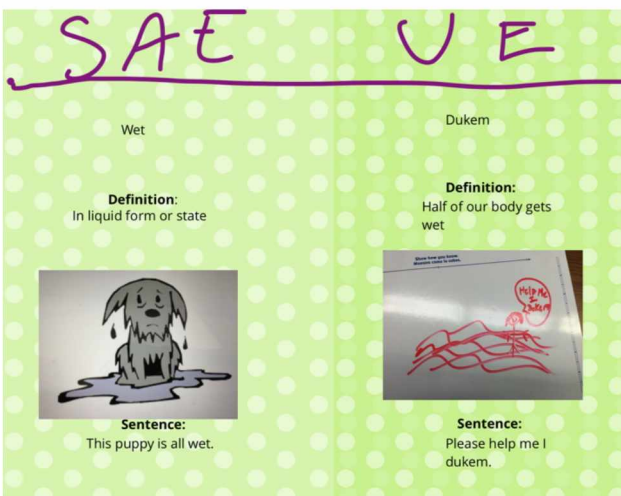


Figure 4.32: Students A and B dukem pages.



Figure 4.33: Students A and B snowmachine pages.



Figure 4.34: Students A and B pulling pages.



Figure 4.35: Students A and B camping pages.



Figure 4.36: Students A and B gram pages.

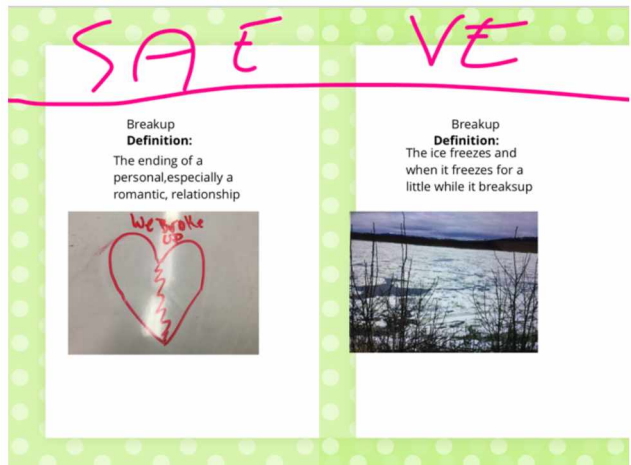


Figure 4.37: Students A and B breakup pages.

Students A and B's Aniak Digital Lexicon displays their meaning making as they worked through each term. These students had a difficult time writing their definitions without using the term and at times did not use their term in the sentence they created. For example, in Figure 4.33 on the SAE side for their sentence the students were supposed to use the term "snowmobile" but instead they still used the VE term "snowmachine". This showed that these students were having a difficult time switching to the SAE term. This is because the term "snowmobile" was brand new to the students and they were unable to associated what they know as a snowmachine to the new term they were learning.

Figures 4.38-4.43 are images of Students E, L and M's Aniak Digital Lexicon Book.

These students used both the whiteboard and the tools available through the Book Creator App.



Figure 4.38: Students E, L and M four-wheeler pages.



Figure 4.39: Students E, L and M snowmachine pages.

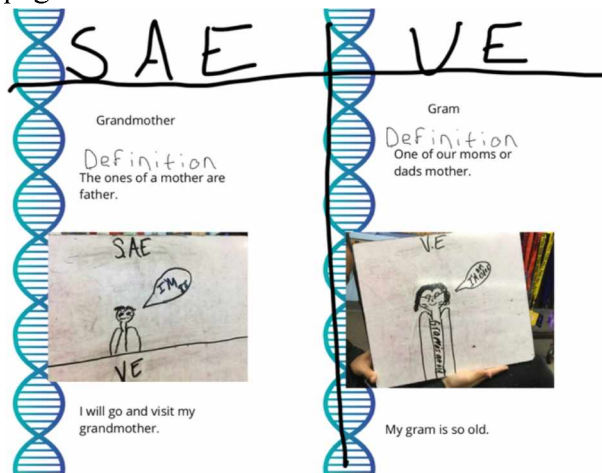


Figure 4.40: Students E, L and M gram pages.

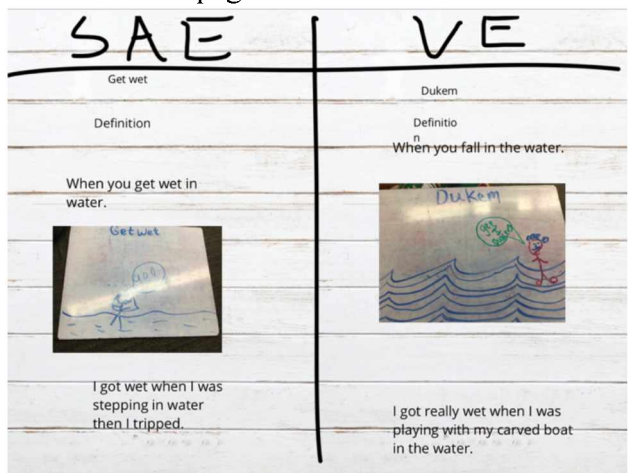


Figure 4.41: Students E, L and M dukem pages.

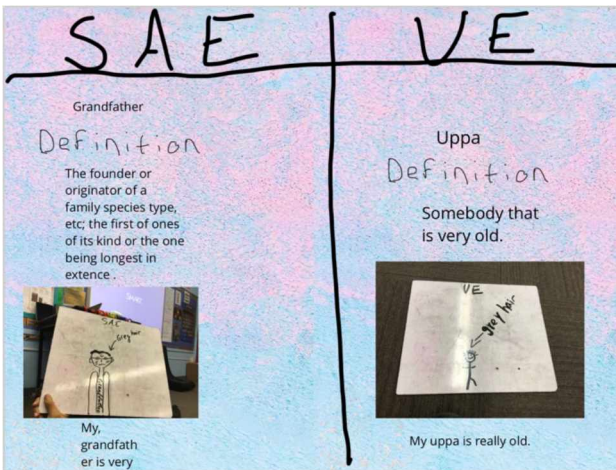


Figure 4.42: Students E, L and M uppa pages.



Figure 4.43: Students E, L and M half-off pages.

In Figure 4.38 the students use the VE term “bike”. They explain that a bike is something people use. This is a very brief definition but shows how common this mode of transportation is in Aniak. Since Aniak is a village that is not connected to the road system, our road system consists of dirt roads that make a loop around the runway. Most people have some kind of means for transportation. There are some cars but most people have four-wheelers. The common term for four-wheelers is “bike.” When people refer to a “bicycle” they use the term “pedal bike.”

The digital lexicon helped students identify the similarities and differences between SAE and VE. Students were able to use a class generated list of VE terms and they worked with a partner to create their own digital lexicon for Aniak VE terms. Next, I will talk about what students learned about VE and SAE through the development of their digital lexicons.

What Students Learned about Village English and Standard Academic English

Students gained new insights into language variations as they were introduced to Standard Academic English (SAE) and Village English (VE). Both of these terms were brand new to the students which meant that as an instructor I needed to build background information and support them in their learning. Some of the ways I did this was by presenting information

gradually, as to not overload the students with information, and to give students opportunities to display understanding. In Figures 4.44-4.47 students were asked to identify terms that they knew were SAE and terms that they knew were VE. This assessment was given after the completion of their Aniak Digital Lexicon Projects.

Ms. Boynton's 5th Grade

Name: [REDACTED] Date: 12-17-18

Directions: Write down as many words or terms as you can think up beneath each SAE and VE.

Examples of Standard Academic English	Examples of Village English
four-wheeler	Bike
bicycle	pedal bike
Cabin	fish camp
grandmother	fish camp
grandfather	gram
Aunt	Uppa
bad	Auntie
wet	bum
	dukem

Figure 4.44: Student I assessment of SAE and VE.

Ms. Boynton's 5th Grade

Name: [REDACTED] Date: 12-17-18

Directions: Write down as many words or terms as you can think up beneath each SAE and VE.

Examples of Standard Academic English	Examples of Village English
Cabin	Bike
wet	Aunt
airplane	Uppa
Camp	Snowmachin
snowmachin	Duckem
crani	Bum
	Camp
	gram
	Brakeup

Figure 4.45: Student G assessment of SAE and VE.

Name: [REDACTED]

Date: 12-17-18

Directions: Write down as many words or terms as you can think up beneath each SAE and VE.

SAE Examples of Standard Academic English	VE Examples of Village English
wet bicycle snowmobile grandpa grandma Aunt boy Junk Half Price Camp	Dukem bike snowmachine oppa Gram Auntie sum Junk Half Price fish camp

Figure 4.46: Student A assessment of SAE and VE.

Name: [REDACTED]

Date: 12/17/18

Directions: Write down as many words or terms as you can think up beneath each SAE and VE.

Examples of Standard Academic English	Examples of Village English
Snow machine means a snowgo that blue snow Camp Aunt four wheeler grandma grandpa bad bickler	Snow machine means a Artic car or Honda fish camp Auntie Bike gram oppa bum Poldel Bike

Figure 4.47: Student D assessment of SAE and VE.

In Figures 4.44 and 4.47 the students used lines to connect the SAE terms to their equivalent VE term. I thought this was a really interesting way for the students to show their understanding. It directly connected terms and showed that students were able to understand the differences and similarities between the meanings of the words. Some terms were also identified as being both SAE and VE for example in Figure 4.46 the term “junk” is listed under SAE and VE. In Figure 4.47 the student wrote the term “snowmachine” for both SAE and VE and they also chose to describe what the word means in both. This shows that the student learned that this term is used in both SAE and VE but it has different definitions. In Figure 4.45 the student identifies the word “airplane” as being an SAE term. This was interesting because this was not a term we used in our Aniak Lexicon Book project. This showed that the student was beginning to make connections outside of our project.

The final assessment piece involved having the students complete the “L” section of the KWL activity. Students completed this activity independently. Below I display the same “L” activities from the students I presented earlier in the chapter with their “KW” sections, which I also include below for reference. The “KW” sections were about what the student knew about dialect prior to this project and what they wanted to know more about. The “L” section is the final section of the KWL activity and it shows what the student learned.

I Know:	I Want To Learn:
A different voice but not a language. She has a dialect with her voice and how she speaks.	Is it a different voice how people talk? Do Ms. Boynton have a dialect? Do I have a dialect? Do Alaska have a dialect of people? Does every body have a different dialect?

Figure 4.48: Student E “KW” section of KWL.

I Learned:
That there is lots of Dialect in the U.S.A I learned that what kind of dialect there is <u>Brittish</u> <u>Smoky mountain</u> <u>and</u> <u>Pittsburgese</u> these are different kind of engalish

Figure 4.49: Student E “L” section of KWL.

I Know:	I Want To Learn:	I Learned:
<p>That Dialect is not language.</p> <p>~~~~~</p> <p>it does not make sense to me.</p>	<p>What is Dialect?</p> <p>Is that different Dialect in the world?</p> <p>Does ms Coyton speak different,</p>	<p>that Dialect can be alot of different things</p> <p>Ex: Junk In SAE</p> <p>Junk means Junk food</p> <p>Dialect means A different speaking in a same way!</p>

Figure 4.50: Student D “KW” section of KWL.

Figure 4.51: Student D “L”
section of KWL.

In Figure 4.49 Student E explains that they learned that there are a lot of dialects in the USA and they give a few examples of the dialects we learned about. They also state at the end that dialects are different kinds of English. This was exciting because at the beginning of this study this particular student was confused about the dialect and languages connection. In Figure 4.51 Student D explains that dialect can be a lot of different things and they go on to explain that in SAE “junk” means junk food. They also state that dialect means “a different speaking in the same way”. By this, they mean that dialect is people speaking in English, just in a different way. Both of these students displayed an understanding that dialect is part of one language, and in this instance English, and that there are many different dialects that exist within the United States.

I Know:	I Want To Learn:
<p>Different language, Spanish, yupik, English</p> <p>I know Dialect isn't language</p>	<p>British, More yupik, More about Mr. Boynton, Japanese, ??? is</p> <p>What is Dialect</p>

Figure 4.52: Student B "KW" section of KWL.

I Learned:
<p>Dialect is about Based on where were from. Like the smoky mountains Midwestern and how people talk in a different way</p>

Figure 4.53: Student B "L" section of KWL.

I Know:	I Want To Learn:
<p>there is other Different Dialects in each State</p>	<p>^{Know to this}</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Why don't talk the same □ Some people talk in different dialects in different states □ or villages

Figure 4.54: Student L "KW" section of KWL.

I Learned:
<p>^{Not Know}</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ I Learned about many kinds of Dialect □ there's many Dialects like Sae and V.E □ I Learned about Sae Standard Academic English and V.E Village English

Figure 4.55: Student L "L" section of KWL.

In Figure 4.53 Student B states that dialect is based on where someone is from. I was really glad to see that this student retained this information because I really stressed this as an explanation to why there are so many different dialects in the USA. In Figure 4.55 Student L states that they learned about Standard Academic English (SAE) and Village English (VE). I was glad to see this student using both the abbreviations and the full term. This showed me that they were recalling the full term of the abbreviation and not just the abbreviated version. It can be easier to remember an abbreviation but if you are not recalling what those letters stand for then the complete meaning may not be fully retained.

Table 4.6: What I learned from the KWL

What I learned
There's two people that talk the same language in in a different way of speaking.
How to speak from different languages English.
That there is lots of dialect in the USA. I learned that what kind of dialect there is: British, Smoky Mountain and Pittsburghese. These are different kinds of English (x3)
That people have different dialects and speak different and dialect is a good thing.
I learned about many kinds of dialect.
There's many dialects like SAE and VE.
I learned about Standard Academic English (SAE) and Village English (VE).
I learned the British dialect from the book <i>Little Red Riding Hood</i> .
Different ways of speaking (x2).
That dialect can be a lot of different things. Ex: In SAE junk means junk food.
Dialect means a different way of speaking in the same way.
Dialect is based on where we're from.
How to talk dialect.
Informal and formal.
Dialect means where you come from and how you speak.

I created Table 4.6 from all the students' "L" assessments. You can see that three students wrote that "That there is lots of dialect in the USA. I learned that what kind of dialect there is: British, Smoky Mountain and Pittsburghese. These are different kinds of English." This was very exciting because it showed me that students were understanding that dialect is an element of the English language used in the United States and that the students were understanding that there are many different dialects across the United States of America.

There were two students that stated that dialect is a different way of speaking. This was interesting because the students focused on sound. When someone is speaking, one of the first things we notice is sound. In this study, we did not focus on sound; rather, we focused on lexicon, the different words used for things. By these students including sound it was telling me that students are aware of how people sound different and that dialectal variations are not an entirely new concept for them. They have noticed language variations but were unaware that there are terms for language variations and that it is a studied phenomenon.

What I Learned From My Students

Through this research I gained an important understanding of my students' linguistic awareness and how they made sense of language. As shown previously Figures 4.1-4.4 display the student work completed at the beginning of this TAR with the "KW" sections and Figures 4.49, 4.51, 4.53 and 4.55 show the "L" section that students completed after the Aniak Digital Lexicon was completed. Students were able to make a few connections to the term dialect at the beginning but mostly they did not know what it was yet.

As students worked in pairs to create their Aniak Digital Lexicons books they were challenged with finding the SAE words that fit with the VE class generated list. Students were able to work together to define the VE terms and then they had to decide what the SAE equivalent was for each word. This process gave students the opportunity to look closely at the VE terms and how they compare/contrast to SAE words. Through this process students were gaining an understanding of the sociolinguistic differences between their own dialect and SAE.

At the end of this entire project students filled in the "What I Learned" section of the KWL activity. In this activity students were able to identify what dialect was and give examples of different dialects across the USA that we had studied. Most students listed that they now knew

about Standard Academic English and Village English. Also, that they knew about formal and informal language. These were some of the key items that students were able to show that they learned from this project. This showed that my students were making meaning and had transformed their schema. I was very pleased to see that students were able to explain what dialect was, compared to the beginning when the majority of students said they did not know what dialect was, and that they were able to list some different types of dialect.

Through this process, I overall learned more about how my students made meaning. Their conversations, realizations, questions, and the difficulties they had through this instructional unit gave me insight into their learning processes.

What I Learned About My Instruction

As a result of this TAR inquiry, I was able to observe my own practice and I gained a deeper understanding about how I make instructional decisions in the classroom. As an educator, I am constantly reflecting on my practice. This teacher action research allowed me to take an in depth look at how my instruction influenced how my students made meaning. Overall, I was pleased with the instructional decisions that I made during this teacher action research. There were some things that I can improve upon, such as providing students more time to process, but I feel that whenever I noticed a student learning need, I addressed it right away during this project rather than making a note and moving on. When I noticed something not going well, I stopped and reassessed the goals of the instruction or activity and made adjustments. This is something that I continue to do daily with students. I have also learned that it is fine to show students that you make mistakes as an educator and are willing to address them rather than just moving on. In doing so I feel that I am optimizing the learning environment by

showing how adults and kids can learn together. In the following chapter, I will expand on what I learned from my students and from my instruction.

Chapter 5: Conclusions, Implication and Future Research

This teacher action research (TAR) gave me new insights into how I instruct language in my classroom. Throughout this process I learned about my beliefs and grew as an educator. Being able to conduct my research in my own classroom enabled me to expand upon my own instruction and learn about both my students and myself as a teacher. Reflecting on my practice was something that I continuously practiced but nothing near to the extent that this TAR allowed. Being able to have data and to go through the process of coding and analyzing allowed me to take an in-depth look at my practice. While conducting this research I learned that students are able to differentiate between formal and informal language, given the proper instruction. I also learned that engaging students in activities that develop their language awareness supports students in understanding the differences between home discourse and school discourse, specifically in this case Village English (VE) and Standard Academic English (SAE).

For this research study, I developed three questions based around my inquiry of how to develop students' sociolinguistic awareness through building a digital lexicon. My research questions were: What does Village English (VE) look like in Aniak? What did I do to help my students learn about Aniak lexicon/VE? What did my students learn about Aniak lexicon/VE? My inquiry began in the spring of 2017 while taking a class about language variations at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. This class sparked an interest in language use and varieties across the USA. It seemed to me right away that language variety played a pivotal role in some of the issues in rural Alaskan schools. Most people are familiar with different languages but many people are not familiar with dialectical variations within languages. The word "accent" is commonly used incorrectly to describe the way someone speaks different from our monolingual Standard English. Based on this spark I decided to further my inquiry and focus

on developing students' sociolinguistic awareness. At the time, I was very interested in how I could help students understand language variations and how they would code-switch between formal and informal language once they learned about the similarities and differences.

I was interested in finding ways to help students perform better on academic assessments as well as use the proper form of language in social settings. Academic assessments do not take into account a students' dialect. Because of this, raters on these tests will mark students incorrect on responses that may reflect their own dialect but do not reflect the Standard English accepted on said test. This is not really a learner's error, it is students using their own dialect to make meaning.

Through this process my own understanding of language variations developed. Prior to this study I did not realize how complex the English language was and how unique dialects were across the United States. I was fascinated by the regional differences I was noticing and I wanted to learn more about what other people noticed, especially my students. I wondered if they felt that schools taught a different way of speaking than their home life. I thought back to my own childhood and I could recall that my cousins from the south spoke slightly differently from me and they even used some different words. For example, I specifically remember going to a restaurant with my cousins when we were young. When ordering a beverage my cousin was surprised to hear me ask for a "pop". She informed me that they call carbonated beverages "coke" where she is from. I was astounded by this and very confused. My research was guided by this spark of curiosity. When I first began studying dialectal variations through course work at the University of Alaska Fairbanks I knew that I wanted to pursue research that was related to language variations. I wanted to specifically know more about how students interacted with language and how I could support their language awareness development.

What I learned About Explicit Instruction on Language Variations

As I began my explicit instruction with students, I noticed that students did not have a clear understanding of what different languages were. I decided I should make sure they know what languages are and we discussed how people in Aniak speak English but there are some people who speak the Native Alaskan language of Yugtun. Students have been learning some Yugtun in school for the first time this year as another teacher has volunteered to teach a Yup'ik studies class at our school. Next, we talked about how students have been using the online program Duo Lingo to learn another language. Duo Lingo is an online program that teaches you a language through quizzes and games. Most of my students have been working a few times a month on either Spanish or French. I wanted to make sure that students first understood what different languages were prior to learning about varying dialects within English.

After I felt students had a solid grasp on what language was, we moved on to learning about variations of the English language across the United States of America. At first, this too was a difficult concept for students to understand. I quickly realized that I needed to slow down my instruction and allow students the proper amount of time to process the new information they were learning. I began this study thinking the explicit instruction portion would take one week, but after the considerations I have discussed the explicit instruction took 2 weeks. I chose to focus on the English language and its varying dialects but I did inform students that other languages have dialects as well. For instance, the Spanish spoken in Spain differs from the Spanish spoken in South American countries. But, for the purpose of our work we were going to focus on the English language and its variations.

Overall, I felt that I did a good job of adapting my instruction to meet the needs of my students. I quickly recognized at the beginning of my instruction that students would need more

time to both process the information and practice identifying elements of dialect. The students were engaged in the instructional lessons and were displaying a need for more processing time. I wanted to make sure I was not going too quickly and losing the students' focus. I evaluated my instruction daily as I wrote in my teacher journal. The journaling process allowed me to reflect on my instruction and make educational decisions that would focus on the needs shown by my students. This is why I adapted my instructional procedures to maximize the learning that was taking place.

What I Learned About Language Awareness Through Students Creating a Digital Lexicon

I quickly discovered that after a bit of explanation and discussion students were very much aware of language differences. Students were noticing that people spoke differently, especially teachers who come from the lower 48, such as myself. This opened the door of communication between my students and myself about language. The students' natural curiosity arose as they began discussing how some of their past teachers spoke. They noted how one teacher said "ya'll" and "hun" a lot. I explained that that teacher was from the southern part of the lower 48 and those are very common terms to use.

What my students were not aware of was the lexical differences that their own dialect has compared to Standard Academic English (SAE). This was something that was difficult for the students to grasp at first. When I began the activity to identify Aniak Lexicon, students were able to write their terms but they did not realize that the common term that they had for the item was not an SAE term. This showed that the students were unaware that some terms they use are not a common term used and that in fact there are other words for those terms. As I had anticipated, students needed support to understand what common terms that are used in Aniak are considered Village English. The students were amazed to learn that they not only had a dialect but that it

was called Village English, they had never heard the term before. I explained that I have my own dialect based on where I am from and it is called Midwestern. This helped students understand that people from different regions speak differently and that dialect is based on where someone is from.

Implications for Educators

Prior to my research I hypothesized that explicitly teaching students about their home discourse, VE, and school discourse, SAE, would help them in school. By helping them in school I mean that they will be able to identify when to use their dialect and when to use Standard Academic English, thus helping them during assessments such as district-mandated testing and state-mandated testing.

During this study, the conversations around language changed. Students began recognizing informal language and when to use it. I was able to make statements such as Excerpt 12, feeling confident that the students understood what I meant. Students began recognizing when to use informal VE and formal SAE. In Excerpt 12, I am preparing students to take a district-mandated reading assessment.

Excerpt 12: Teacher Journal December 10, 2018

“Ok, today we are going to take your Star Reading Assessment. There will be some fill in the blank vocabulary questions on the test. Do you think you should choose SAE words or VE words on this test” Ms. Boynton

“SAE”-all students

“very good” -Ms. Boynton.

In the above excerpt, you can see how students display an understanding of when to use formal SAE language. This excerpt took place near the end of my research and I knew that even after I was completed with my study, I did not want the conversation to end about language. I wanted to be able to refer to formal and informal language and have the students understand. In order to

continue to have students understand I knew that I needed to keep the conversation going about language. By this I mean that I needed to remind students of the terms and help them understand when to use formal language and when to use informal language. Below in Excerpt 13, a student notices when the teacher uses informal language with a student.

Excerpt 13: Teacher Journal December 10, 2018

“Ms. Boynton, you just said what’s up”-Student C
“is that formal or informal” -Ms. Boynton
“informal” –Student C
“very good” -Ms. Boynton.

In Excerpt 13 a student is pointing out the language use from their teacher. This shows how students are recognizing the language use of others. This is another implication that students have learned about language variations during this research study. This also shows how students are initiating language conversation.

In a post-research activity, students were asked to create sentences using their weekly vocabulary words. I stressed to students that these needed to be complete sentences with a capital letter at the beginning and proper ending punctuation. As students were writing and discussing some of their chosen sentences with me, I immediately noticed that many students were using their home discourse of Village English. I decided to stop the class and we reviewed what formal language SAE is and what informal language VE is. I then asked students which type of language should the students be using on this class assignment. The whole class erupted in “SAE”. I praised them and then asked them to continue working. This was a great example of how a quick review can help the students utilize what they learned during my study.

Completing this study with my students has opened the door to regular conversation about formal and informal language as well as referencing VE and SAE. I am already seeing that

my students are adjusting their assignments to ensure that they are using SAE terms. I believe this is a huge step. On standardized tests such as WIDA and PEAKS students will be scored by raters who do not take into account a student's dialect and would mark test items as incorrect if the students are using terms that do not carry the same meaning to the rater as they do for the student. If students can adjust their writing to meet the expectations of the raters then their scores will improve. This is one of future outcomes I hope to see from my research.

In Excerpt 14, I am reviewing possible test items on the Performance Evaluation for Alaska's Schools (PEAKS), our state mandated standardized test for fifth grade ELA, with students. I have put a sentence on the SmartBoard that has grammatical errors and we are about to correct those errors as a class.

Excerpt 14: Teacher Journal Entry April 3, 2019

"Ok, so we have some sentences here that have some grammatical errors, we need to rewrite these sentences using what type of language?" –Ms. Boynton

"SAE" –students

"yes, so is that formal or informal language?" Ms-Boynton

"formal" –students

"very good" –Ms. Boynton

I was very pleased that my students had retained what we had learned back in December; this review lesson was taught in April, a whole 3 months after my research study. This showed that the project had a lasting impact with these students and that they would now approach items such as correcting grammatical errors in sentences in a different way than they would prior to this study. This shows that open communication about language can have positive impacts on students' performance in the academic setting.

I think that one of the key elements that made my explicit instruction of dialect successful was slowly introducing students to dialect by letting them notice how people sound different and

use different words for things. I began this study by using the video Little Red Riding Hood where the narrator had a strong British dialect. The focus of the video was dissecting plot but as we worked, I asked students about what they heard from the narrator. Students were able to pick out words the narrator used that differed from the kinds of words my students used. I think that this step was a crucial component that sparked students' curiosity. From here I began talking with students about the term dialect and what it meant; additionally, I showed them other examples of dialects across the United States of America. We talked about how dialect includes sounds and words. However, we would focus on the different words that are used and that the term for that is lexicon.

While teaching about dialect it is important to help students understand that there are many different dialects across the United States that vary in many different ways. I explained to my students that because there is so much language diversity the people that created our textbooks needed to pick one and write the textbooks in that dialect; this does not mean that one dialect is better than another, it just means that they are different and are used at different times. In schools the accepted dialect is SAE. Textbooks are written in SAE and assessments require students to respond using SAE. This is why it is crucial that students know the difference between their own dialect, in this case VE, and SAE.

In conclusion, it is crucial for both students and educators to develop sociolinguistic awareness. Not only does this help students perform better academically, it also promotes tolerance. In today's world tolerance is needed more than ever. My hope is that students will become aware of the differences between formal speech known as SAE and informal speech known as VE and will understand the appropriateness of when to use them. Communities all across the United States of America speak a dialectal variation of English. My hope is that in

bringing about awareness educators and students will be better prepared to teach and understand that dialects are not “broken English”, they are community and culturally centered linguistic variations and one is not better than the other. There is a time in place for both and my ultimate goal is to teach students to understand those social differences.

What I Learned About TAR

This teacher action research (TAR) helped me look at my methods of instruction and interaction with students critically. This process was not easy and I faced many challenges along the way. The greatest challenge from the beginning was finding the time to conduct my research. Having a plan and a framework to guide me made everything a bit smoother. During my TAR, I followed the characteristics of TAR outlined by Mills (Mills, 2018, pp.15-16) by:

1. being committed to my continued professional development and school improvement,
2. having decision-making authority in what I wanted to focus this TAR on,
3. reflecting on my practices, before, during and after conducting this study, and
4. choosing an area of focus, determining my data collection techniques, analyzing and interpreting my data and developing an action plan.

By following the guidelines above I was able to keep my focus and I was reminded that the work that I was doing was not only beneficial to myself and my students but it would eventually benefit other educators who are interested in helping students develop linguistic awareness.

In conducting this TAR, I also followed the steps of constructivist grounded theory (CGT) framework as discussed by (Charmaz, 2014) which includes gathering rich data, initial coding, focused coding and memo writing. This process helped me analyze and interpret my data. I found it especially helpful to memo write during the coding process. When I noticed

something interesting, I would create a memo about the finding and would be able to come back to it later to investigate further.

The structure of TAR and the framework in CGT allowed me to conduct my research with confidence that I was doing both my students and myself due diligence. I wanted to make sure that I was holding myself to both the highest standard and I was being true to what my data reflected. At times things were very difficult with organizing and conducting my research. It was helpful to have the structure of TAR and the framework of TAR to guide me back to where I needed to be. Having a framework made organizing, planning, conducting and analyzing my data possible. There were times when I felt overwhelmed by my data, all ten hours of recordings and numerous student artifacts, but the process of TAR and CGT grounded me and reminded me to trust the process.

In conducting this teacher action research, I learned a lot of valuable information as well as the process of planning, designing, implementing, recording and analyzing the data collected based on the inquiry I formed. Prior to conducting this TAR, I was consistently reflecting upon my practice by adjusting lesson plans and making notes to remind myself of changes I wanted to make for next year. But these notes were often lost from year to year. This TAR helped me develop a consistent teacher journal that I will continue to use post-research. The teacher journal has been a huge gain to my practice. I use my daily lesson plans to map out my week and then I write down notes either daily or weekly. The biggest reason I did not do this prior to my research was that I didn't seem to utilize my notes and of course having the time to do it. Teachers know that time is one of the most crucial elements to being an educator. Prior to this study I had concluded that my time was better spent doing other things rather than writing in a journal. After

keeping a researcher journal and being able to reflect back on my entries during the data analysis portion of my TAR, I realized just how invaluable a teacher journal can be.

Conclusion and Future Research

This TAR was focused around teaching students about dialect through explicit instruction and through students creating a digital lexicon. I wanted to see how students responded to my explicit instruction. The KWL activity and the SAE vs VE assessments helped me understand how my students were making meaning. The Aniak Digital Lexicon books showcased the dialectal connections students were making between the two dialects. Overall, students learned a great deal about dialect and specifically the similarities and differences between VE and SAE. This research also changed the classroom discourse around language. Students were able to recall the terms they learned, such as VE and SAE, and they were now thinking about their word choices in their assignments. My hope is that they will continue to think about what they learned and it will help them perform better on standardized tests.

I conducted this TAR with three general inquiries. As I conducted my TAR my inquiries evolved to what you see below.

Research Questions

1. What does Village English (VE) look like in Aniak?
2. What did I do to help my students learn about Aniak lexicon/VE?
3. What did my students learn about Aniak lexicon/VE?

This TAR helped me answer the above questions. The students and I developed a list of fifteen terms for Aniak VE. As we did this, we talked about what VE looks like in Aniak. I helped my students understand what common terms they use would be considered VE as they were unaware

of the uniqueness of some of their common terms. The final project had the students working with a partner developing a digital lexicon of Aniak. Through this project students worked together to explore their dialect and how it compared to SAE. At the end of the project my students displayed a good understanding of VE and SAE as shown in their final “L” portion of the “KWL” and their final assessment.

After conducting this TAR, I have a much better understanding of how to teach students about dialect. Next, I would like to explore how the students will retain what they learned. Will they be able to differentiate between VE and SAE next school year? Without teachers continuing the conversation I fear that students will lose a vast majority of what they learned. This is why it is a crucial conversation that all educators need to have with students. Once we recognize the importance of teaching students about sociolinguistic awareness, I believe we will see students performing better on standardized assessments, as they will be aware of the language accepted on that those tests, and we will see a more tolerant country. In order for this to happen teachers need to be trained in sociolinguistic awareness. People tend to fear and make judgments on what they do not know or understand. If we teach children about language variations then they will be more accepting and tolerating of people’s differences.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Initial Review Board Approval



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Institutional Review Board

909 N Koyukuk Dr. Suite 212, P.O. Box 757270, Fairbanks, Alaska 99775-7270

November 15, 2017

To: Wendy Martelle
Principal Investigator
From: University of Alaska Fairbanks IRB
Re: [1148728-1] Sociolinguistic Study During an Salmon Unit

Thank you for submitting the New Project referenced below. The submission was handled by Expedited Review under the requirements of 45 CFR 46.110, which identifies the categories of research eligible for expedited review.

Title:	Sociolinguistic Study During an Salmon Unit
Received:	October 26, 2017
Expedited Category:	6 and 7
Action:	APPROVED
Effective Date:	November 13, 2017
Expiration Date:	November 13, 2018

This action is included on the December 6, 2017 IRB Agenda.

No changes may be made to this project without the prior review and approval of the IRB. This includes, but is not limited to, changes in research scope, research tools, consent documents, personnel, or record storage location.

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Appendix B: Coding example

Initial CODING	File Name: TASCAM_0020	Title: KW(L) Group Discussion C, E, M, A
<u>Codes</u>	<u>Lines</u>	<u>Transcription</u>
Stating the students misunderstanding of what dialect means	9	M: this is not making sense to me right now ok go
Explaining dialect by using the example of the British audio we listened to in class	10	C: English she have British dialect of reading little red riding hood the book
Stating the students misunderstanding of what dialect means	11	A: this is not making sense to me
Explaining what dialect means and that it is not a different language	12	E: a different voice but not a language she has a dialect with her words and how she speaks
Encouraging more discussion on dialect within the group	13-15	M: we're done Ms. Boynton T: keep talking about it discuss it once you have each shared then talk ok so what do I know what do I think I know

Appendix C: Dialogue and dialect slides

What is the difference between
dialogue and **dialect**?



“Dia” means across, right?

“Logue” means ... something, and
“lect” means... what???

Appendix D: Dialogue slide

Let's talk *dialogue*.

Dialogue *is* (two or more people) talking!

Talking *is* dialogue.



Here's an example:

I am lecturing to you right now. But when two or more people sit down to talk back and forth, they are having a dialogue. Even if they're arguing!



So what's dialect?

In a nutshell, it's just the different ways we all speak the same language.



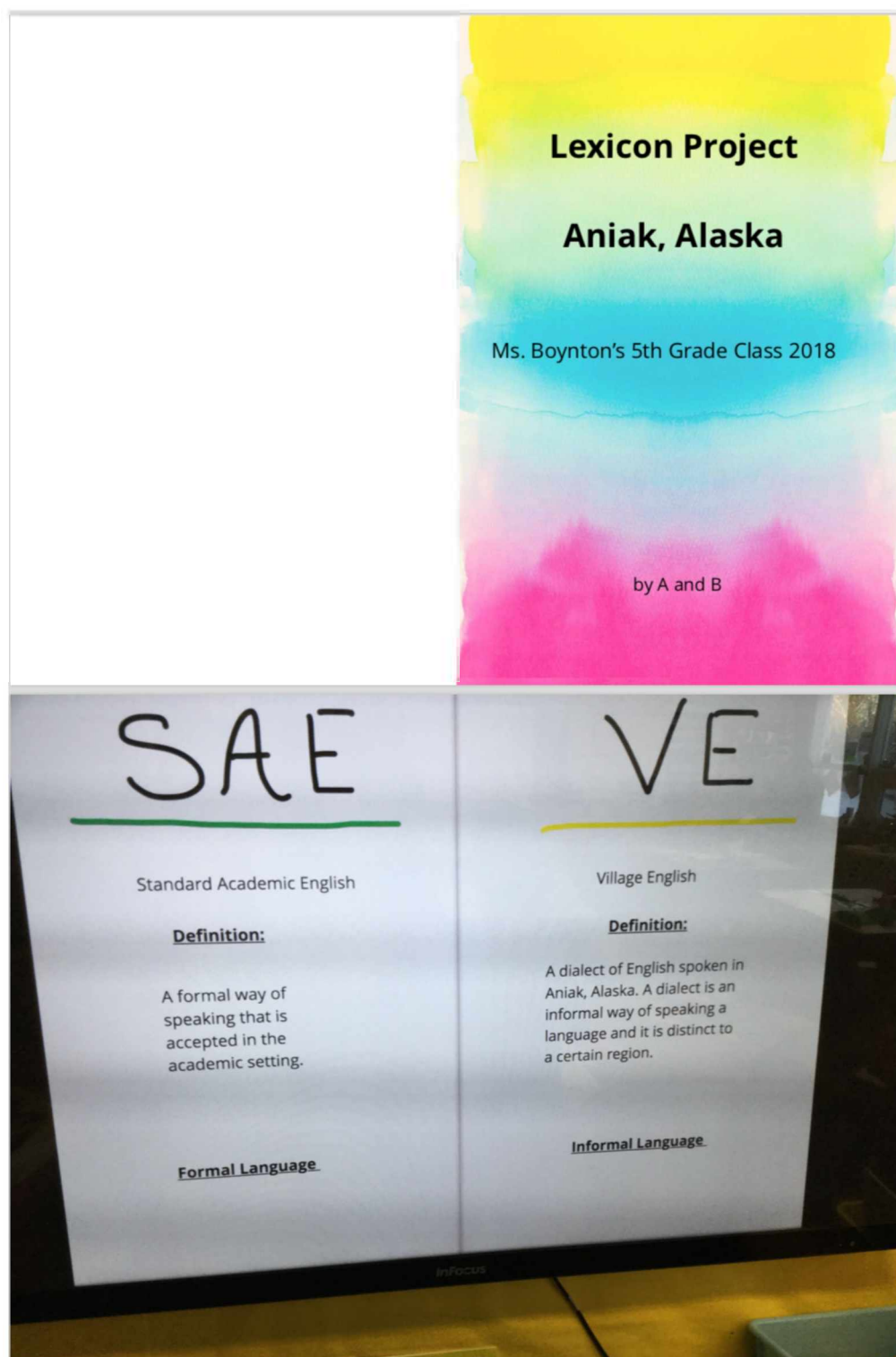
- A dialect is the language used by people who live in a certain place.
- You can guess where a person is from or where he or she lives. Sometimes you can even guess a character's age or what type of job he or she has.

Appendix F: Class generated word list

Aniak Lexicon BookCreator Project Word List

- 1) Bum
- 2) Gram
- 3) Dukem
- 4) Snowmachine
- 5) Fish Camp
- 6) Pedal Bike
- 7) Pulling
- 8) Camping
- 9) Bike
- 10) Uppa
- 11) Half Off
- 12) Auntie
- 13) Junk
- 14) Breakup
- 15) Short Pants

Appendix G: Students A and B Aniak digital lexicon book



SAE

VE

Bum

Definition:

A person who avoids work and sponges on others.



Sentence:

A homeless person is sleeping in the dumpster.

Bum

Definition:

A bum person who isn't going to be a good person



Sentence:

Your a bum person.

SAE

VE

Wet

Definition:

In liquid form or state



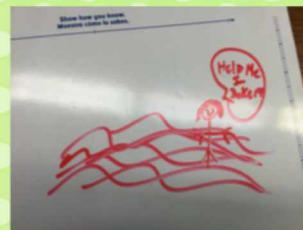
Sentence:

This puppy is all wet.

Dukem

Definition:

Half of our body gets wet



Sentence:

Please help me I dukem.

SAE VE

Snowmobile

Definition:

To operate or ride on a snowmobile.



Sentence:

I am going to go get wood on my dads snowmachine

Snowmachine

Definition:

It's a type of a vehicle that rides us in snow



Sentence:

We went for a snowmachine ride.

SAE VE

camp

Definition:

To establish or pitch a camp



Sentence:

I am going to go camp with my friend

Fishcamp

Definition:

To pitch a tent or stay there for the night



Sentence:

We go boating and we go to our fishcamp

SAE VE

Pedal bike

Definition:

To ship on transport
directly by bicycle or
other means



Sentence:

I am going to go for a
bike ride to the river.

Pedal bike

Definition:A pedal bike
that isn't a four wheeler
a pedal bike has two
wheels



Sentence:

I won a new pedal bike at
the fair .

SAE VE

Pulling

Definition:

To draw or bawl toward
oneself or itself in a
particular position



Sentence:

I got pulled by a boat
and I got wet.

Pulling

Definition:

To have a sled attached
to a bike or a
snowmachine



Sentence:

I went pulling with my
friend.

SAE

Camping

Definition:
Such tents or shelters
collectively



Sentence:

I am going to go camp
at my cabin

VE

Camping

Definition:
To camp at a friends
house



Sentence:

I am camping with
a friend

SAE

Bik
e

Definition:

A bike vehicle especially
a hackney carriage



Sentence:

I bought a bike at AC

VE

Bik
e

Definition:

To ride on in the
summer or in the
winter



Sentence:

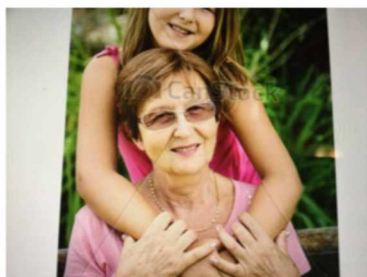
I am going for a bike
ride

SAE

Grandma

Definition:

The mother of one's father or mother



Sentence:
I am visiting my grandma .

VE

Gram

Definition:

A gram that takes care of you



Sentence:

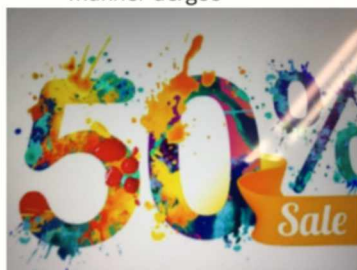
I am going to see my gram during winter break.

SAE

Half off

Definition:

Not good in any manner dergee



Sentence:

That ice cream is half off.

VE

Half off

Definition:

That person is half off and they are bad



Sentence:

My homework is half off.

SAE

Grandfather

Definition:
The father of one's
father or mother



Sentence:
I love you so much
grandpa.

VE

Uppa

Definition:
A uppa that takes care
of you



Sentence:
I am going to get wood
with my uppa.

SAE

Junk

Definition:
Any old discarded
materials metal, paper
or rags

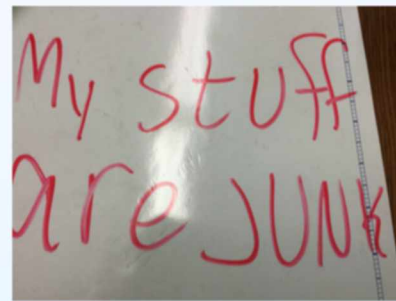


Sentence:
We need to throw away
our junk.

VE

Junk

Definition:
It means that our stuff
are junk



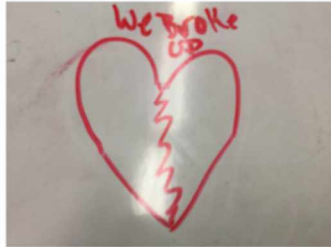
Sentence:
My shoes are junk.

SAE VE

Breakup

Definition:

The ending of a personal, especially a romantic, relationship



Breakup

Definition:

The ice freezes and when it freezes for a little while it breaks up

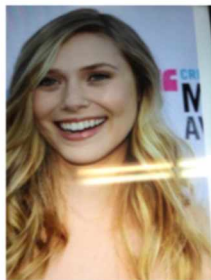


SAE

Shorts

Definition:

Having little length not long



VE

Short pants

Definition:

To wear shorts not long



SAE

Aunt

Definition:

Oh, say it's most
bedtime auntie then I
won't have to get up at
all



VE

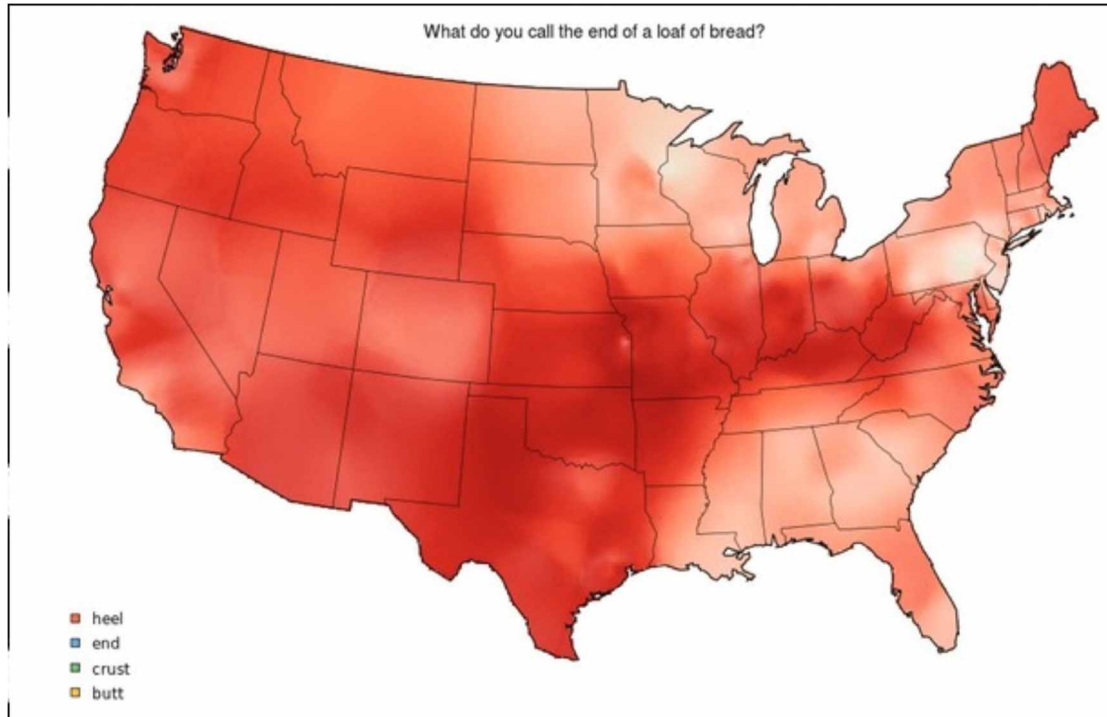
Auntie

Definition:

To visit your auntie

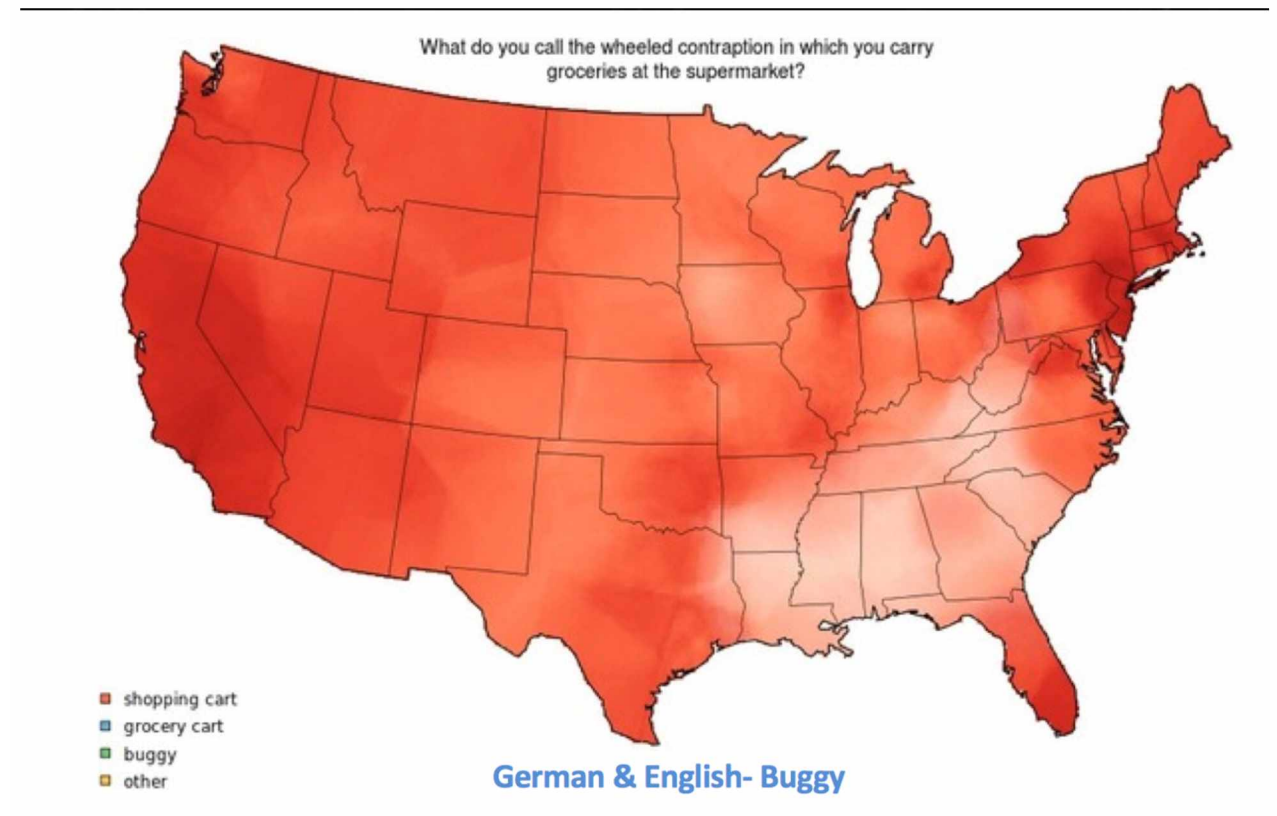


Appendix H: Dialect map of the end of bread



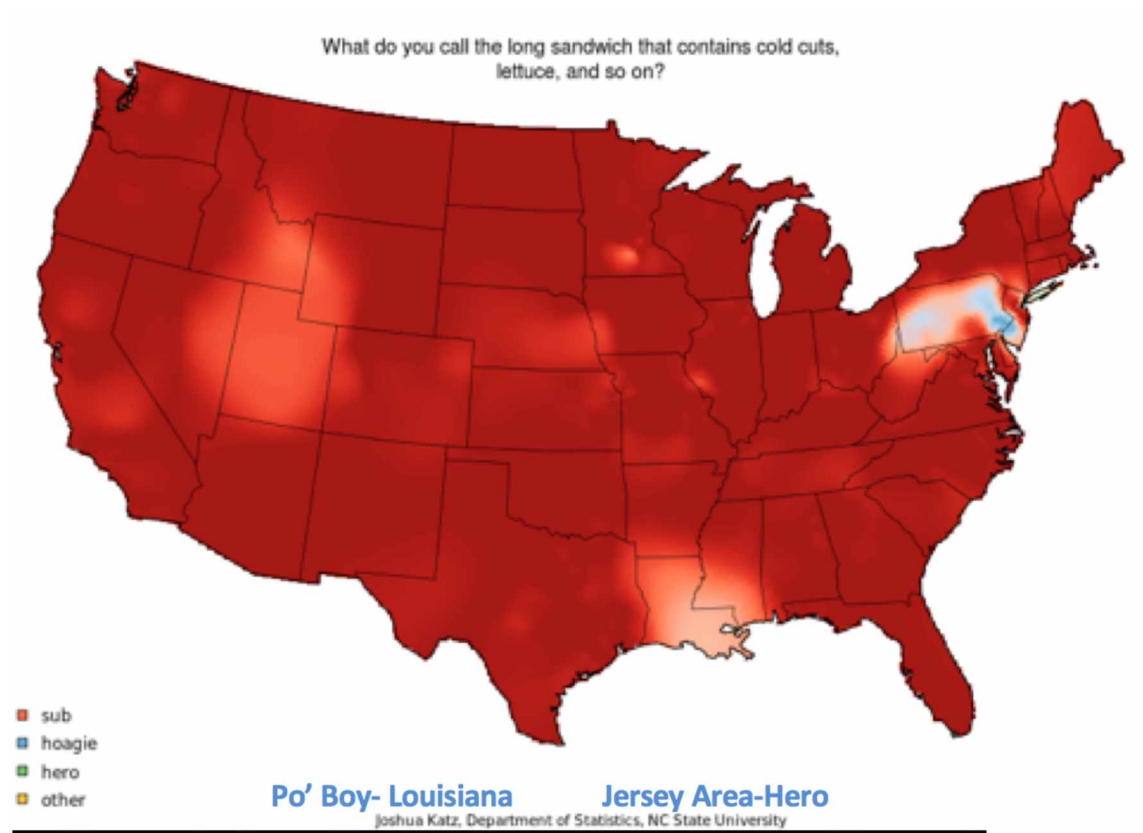
Abadi (2018)

Appendix I: Dialect map of a grocery cart



Abadi (2018)

Appendix J: Dialect map of a sandwich



Abadi (2018)